# Tuk in Barbados:
# The History, Development and Recontextualisation of a Musical Genre

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Caribbean Studies

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For the people of Barbados

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| Bajan | Colloquialism for Barbadian |
| BDS $ | Barbados dollar. This is fixed against the U.S. dollar at BDS $1.98 to U.S. $1 |
| CHEKS | Cultural and Historical Exposure for Kids in Schools |
| Free coloured people | People of mixed black and white race, free of slavery or indentureship |
| Guinea | Name used by fifteenth-century explorers for the West Coast of Africa from Gambia to the Congo |
| Indentured Servants | People who signed contracts to serve employers for a fixed period of time in return for their passage and subsistence |

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# DECLARATION

I declare that all of the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own, unless otherwise referenced, and that it has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

## Abstract

This thesis is the first major investigation of tuk and documents an important part of Barbados' heritage. It also opens up opportunities for further research to be undertaken in Barbadian music and in related fields elsewhere in the Caribbean region.

This thesis explores the history, development and recontextualisation of Barbadian tuk music. The history of Barbados is examined before considering Barbadian culture and how a Barbadian national identity was increasingly sought during the twentieth century, particularly after Independence. Music during the period of slavery, African music and British military music, the major influences on tuk, are explored before a study of the instruments, rhythms and repertoire of tuk. Types of tuk, and tuk-type musics elsewhere are examined and tuk is compared with other musics. Modern tuk musicians, their treatment of tuk, and how tuk has been, and continues to be, recontextualised is explored.

The history, organisation and roles of the Barbados Landship, an organisation modelled on the British Royal Navy, but which never goes to sea, are considered together with the Landship's relationship with the tuk band. Finally, an overview of music and festivals in Barbados today places tuk in the country's musical scene.

This thesis argues that tuk is predominantly a music that originated from imitating European military fife and drum bands, and that the African elements of it are to be found in rhythmic improvisation and some African retentions that have direct parallels with military fife and drum bands. It also argues that tuk exhibits characteristics similar to musics found elsewhere that can be attributed to the effects of the slave trade, colonialism and migration. In addition, the thesis argues that the Landship's relationship with the tuk band is a continuation of a naval tradition.

# INTRODUCTION

This Introduction provides background information on the Caribbean and Barbados. I explain the background to this thesis before discussing my aims and methodology, as well as problems obtaining materials and issues pertaining to being an outsider undertaking research in Barbados. The extent and results of newspaper searches and the Literature Review are presented. An outline of the contents of the thesis is presented in the Summary.

## THE CARIBBEAN

The Caribbean is a vast geographical region, an assortment of island and mainland territories ranging in size from less than a hundred square kilometres to more than a hundred thousand, bounded to its east by the Atlantic Ocean, to the south and west by Central and Southern America, and to the north by the Gulf of Mexico, Florida and the Atlantic Ocean. The Tropic of Cancer runs just north of Cuba, the largest island, and through the Bahamas in the north of the region, whilst Trinidad in the south lies just over 10° north of the equator.

Part of the Caribbean region is the West Indies. This is the archipelago that starts in the Bahamas and continues through the Antilles, which spread east, west and south from Florida in the United States to Venezuela in South America. The name West Indies dates back to the time of Columbus who set out on a voyage to the Indies in 1492, believing he could reach them by sailing west rather than east. On arriving in the Bahamas he believed he had arrived in the Indies and so designated the region 'the Indies' and the indigenous population he found there 'Indians'. When his mistake was realised some years later, the area was renamed 'the West Indies' so as to differentiate it from the real Indies in the east.

The Caribbean territories were largely populated by the Spanish during the sixteenth century who employed the indigenous populations, initially in their gold mines, before turning to sugar cane production. When the indigenous populations declined through overwork and susceptibility to European diseases to which they had no immunity, various strategies to populate the region were tried before turning to the importation of African slaves.[1] In the early part of the seventeenth century, English, French and Dutch expeditions to the region saw the start of a turbulent history for many of the colonised territories.[2]

Much of the modern Caribbean has been shaped by the European colonisers who were purely financially motivated. The culture of the area was based on the cultures of the colonising countries, modified as necessary to cope with the climatic and geographical constraints of the territory being colonised. Many Caribbean territories changed hands on more than one occasion, thus they were subjected to varying inputs of culture and religion; the common factor in many places was the introduction of sugar plantations and slavery. Barbados was unusual in that it remained in English and British hands from 1625, when it was first claimed, up until Independence in 1966.

The key colonisers of the region were the English, the French, the Spanish and the Dutch, with the Danes and Swedes to a lesser degree, and the legacy of their impact on the region is evident today through all aspects of life. Some territories are still dependencies of their former colonisers who may provide assistance in times of crisis, for example when mass evacuation of Montserrat was necessary in

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[1] Eric Williams, *From Columbus to Castro: The History of the Caribbean 1492-1969* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1970; repr. New York: Vintage Books, 1984), pp. 32-7. Ronald Segal, *The Black Diaspora* (London: Faber and Faber, 1995), p. 15.

[2] For a general introduction to the Caribbean region see John Gilmore, *Faces of the Caribbean* (London: Latin America Bureau, 2000).

the 1990s due to volcanic activity, British troops were sent to assist and some evacuees were flown to Britain. Other countries such as Martinique are Departments of France and are therefore part of the European Union.

For many people the Caribbean epitomises a glamorous image of blue sea and sky, white beaches, palm trees, year-round sunshine and a laid-back approach to life. This however is only a small part of the picture and the reality for many Caribbean people is far from glamorous. There has always been a clear social divide going back to the times of slavery when the plantation owners and managers lived in luxury compared to their slaves. After Emancipation this divide was perpetuated, and today there is, as in any society, a diverse range of living conditions, demonstrated in Barbados with the multi-million dollar luxury residences and the wooden chattel houses.[3]

The tropical climate is something envied by many who live in northern climes, but rarely do they experience, or even consider, the extremities of the tropics such as hurricanes and the devastation that can be wreaked. Barbados is always at risk and in September 2002, over six hundred houses were damaged or destroyed by Tropical Storm Lili.[4]

## BARBADOS

Barbados is the most easterly of all the islands in the Caribbean. It is 22 kilometres wide, 34 kilometres long and covers an area of 429 square kilometres. Unlike neighbouring islands, which are volcanic and hilly, Barbados is formed of

[3] A chattel house is a timber constructed dwelling designed to be easily moved and reconstructed quickly. These originated in the days when former slaves were allowed to build their homes on unused plantation land, but only until the owners wanted the use of their land. Henry Fraser et al., *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage* (Kingston: Heinemann Caribbean, 1990), p. 37.
[4] 'Halfway - State to rebuild 20 houses destroyed by Lili', *Daily Nation* Online, 5 October 2002.

coral and has a fairly flat terrain, which makes it suitable for agriculture. The highest point at 336 metres is Mount Hillaby in the Scotland District in the north-east of the island. The island was originally covered in dense forests but these were more or less destroyed to provide fuel or construction timber for the sugar industry and its associated settlement of the island. Only small isolated areas of forest now exist such as at Turners Hall Woods.

The island's east coast fronts the Atlantic Ocean and therefore is exposed to stronger seas than the south and west coasts which front the Caribbean Sea. The northern end of the island is also subjected to the pounding of the Atlantic, which accounts for the dramatic, rugged coastline in stark contrast to the white sandy beaches and relatively calm, crystal-clear waters of the south and west coasts. The west coast is where the early settlement of the island began, and is today dominated by luxury hotels.

The largest centres of population are concentrated on the west coast, predominantly around the capital, Bridgetown. There are two other major towns, Holetown and Speightstown, and numerous small towns and villages, some of which bear the names of English seaside towns such as Brighton and Dover. Others bear the names of the sugar plantations where they developed and fields of sugar cane often separate the settlements. The island is divided into eleven parishes, all but two of which are bounded on at least one side by the sea.[5]

The population numbers approximately 260,000, over 70 percent of which is of African descent. Around 20 percent is of mixed African and European descent.

[5] A map of Barbados can be found in Appendix A, p. 301.

The remainder are white - descendants of colonists and indentured servants, and more recent immigrants from Britain and North America. There are also small groups of various immigrant communities from elsewhere.[6]

Barbados enjoys year-round sunshine, averaging 8-10 hours a day, and average temperatures ranging from 24-30°C. The position of Barbados in the extreme east of the Caribbean region means it enjoys the cooling effect of the North East Trade Winds. There are two seasons – the wet (or hurricane) season from June to October, which brings enough rain to ensure Barbados remains green, and the dry season from November to May. The dry season, particularly the months of January to March, is a peak time for North American and Canadian tourists escaping the worst of the northern winter at home.

## BACKGROUND

This thesis explores the history, development and recontextualisation of Barbadian tuk music, a fife and drum music. A modern tuk band comprises of four instruments – the kittle drum (a snare drum), the bass drum, the penny whistle (called a flute) and the steel (usually a triangle) as shown in Photograph 1 below:

[6] Trevor G. Marshall, 'All O' We is Bajan' in *Barbados*, ed. by Rachel Wilder (London: APA Publications (HK), 1997), pp. 59-70, (p. 59).

Photograph 1: Salt Fish Soup[7]

Undertaking the research for this thesis has clearly illuminated the point that there is a vast gap in studies on Barbadian, and indeed, Caribbean musics, which has arisen for a number of reasons. In the case of Barbados it is widely believed that the country has no music to call its own, and that belief is held by Barbadians as well as outsiders. Among Barbadians, I recall when I was in the preparatory stages of my research telephoning the Barbadian High Commission in London to see what leads or information they could give me in my research into Barbadian music. I was told, in no uncertain terms, that I had picked the wrong island as Barbados has no music. Unfortunately I did not take the name of the person concerned – I could certainly have changed his mind on that by now. I have had similar views expressed to me in Barbados also.

Among outsiders, meanwhile, many people, certainly in Britain and, I would imagine, elsewhere, lump the Caribbean together as one 'country' or region and assume that Bob Marley, reggae, steelbands, taking drugs and being a

[7] Photograph taken by John Meredith at the Tuk Band Competition, Crop Over Festival, 1 August 1998.

Rastafarian are typical of Caribbean culture. Indeed one person commented to me that when he visited Barbados he was disappointed that all the music was 'Jamaican steel pan', not reggae.[8] This is indicative of the sort of confusion there is over what comes from where. I am sure many Trinidadians would be horrified to hear steelbands called 'Jamaican' even though it has seemingly crossed the borders of the Caribbean region and become a universal 'Caribbean' music. Certainly the low esteem in which Barbados' music has been held has not helped, but the music industry is growing now and music such as soca is gaining Barbados a firm foothold in the Caribbean music market, and, through the diasporic communities, probably further afield.

I chose to research tuk for two key reasons. Firstly because of the need for ethnomusicological research to be undertaken. Research that had been undertaken previously was not by ethnomusicologists and was limited to historical and descriptive accounts.[9] I could therefore offer different perspectives and greater depth as ethnomusicology studies music 'in the context of human life', rather than simply from one particular perspective.[10] Secondly, I believe that since tuk is claimed by its champions to be the true indigenous music of the country (this claim is more common now than when I started my research), and as it is being recontextualised and being promulgated as the national music of Barbados, a comprehensive history and ethnomusicological study of tuk is timely.

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[8] Casual remark made by a member of staff at the Public Record Office, 1 September 2001.
[9] See for example: Curwen Best, 'Banja: excavating inter-facing and re-placing African-Caribbean art' (doctoral thesis, University of Birmingham, 1993); Curwen Best, *Barbadian Popular Music and the Politics of Caribbean Culture*, rev. edn (Vermont: Schenkman Books, 1999); Curwen Best, 'Rhythm of Tuk: a Barbadian Style', *Journal of Caribbean History*, 29 (1995), 37-46; Trevor Marshall, Peggy McGeary and Grace Thompson, *Folk Songs of Barbados* (Kingston: Ian Randle, 1996); Janice Millington, 'Barbados' in *South America, Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean*, ed. by Dale A. Olsen and Daniel E. Sheehy, The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, 2 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), pp. 813-21.
[10] Jeff Todd Titon, 'Preface', in *Worlds of Music: An Introduction to the Music of the World's People*, ed. by Jeff Todd Titon (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992), p. xxi.

There is considerable scope for further research in this field to be undertaken. A prime subject would be similar in-depth studies of other fife and drum musics of the Caribbean region. These would serve as comparisons to this work on tuk and would complete the picture of the evolution of this type of music in the region. There would seem to be some relationship between these musics, some of which are discussed in Chapter 2, pp. 169-181, but extensive research is necessary to enable this to be pinpointed and proven. There is also scope in Barbados for further research and there is much musical material to base this on. Barbadian calypso would be an obvious choice, and a comparative study of Barbadian and Trinidadian calypso would be illuminating and a challenging focus. There are many people in Barbados who are very knowledgeable about Barbadian music, but few have actually undertaken any formal research, thus I believe there is plenty yet to be researched and documented. Further research on tuk is possible. More work could be undertaken comparing the music played by different bands, analysing the rhythmic variations and other stylistic differences. Comparisons could be made between younger and older bands, those who learned tuk through listening to and observing tuk bands in the pre-Independence era, compared to those who have learned tuk since its revival.[11]

This work on tuk contributes to the scholarly study of Caribbean musics, a small but growing collection. Some countries have had their music researched extensively for various reasons and there are a wealth of texts on Jamaican reggae and Trinidadian calypso.[12] The more popular musics and those from larger

[11] Such work has not been undertaken for this thesis as resources of time and funding did not permit extending my work.

[12] For example; Kevin O'Brien Chang and Wayne Chen, *Reggae Routes: The Story of Jamaican Music* (Kingston: Ian Randle, 1998); John H. Cowley, *Carnival, Canboulay and Calypso: Traditions in the Making* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Further examples of texts on calypso are given in Chapter 4, p. 261, Note 28.

islands have, not surprisingly, been picked out for study first. It is however becoming more common to find texts on lesser-known musics and those from smaller places. Tina Ramnarine's work on Chutney from Trinidad; Lorna McDaniel's work on Big Drum from Carriacou; Jocelyne Guilbault's work on Zouk in Martinique, St Lucia, Dominica and Guadeloupe; Gage Averill's work on popular music in Haiti; Brenda Berrian's work on French Caribbean popular songs, music and culture; and Katherine Hagedorn's work on Afro-Cuban Santería are some recent examples of these.[13]

Certainly in the Caribbean there is an increasing awareness of the lack of scholarly work in existence on much of the region's music and there is a desire to address this. In May 2001 I participated in the Inter-American Conference on Black Music Research held in Trinidad attended by many musicologists and ethnomusicologists specialising in Caribbean music or based in the Caribbean. A common topic of conversation was the need to research and document more Caribbean musics, especially the traditional musics before the few remaining practitioners die and the music follows them.

When I started researching tuk I had little idea of where my work would lead. Some people in Barbados doubted that I would be able to write a thesis on tuk. Others said that everything there was to write had already been written. However no ethnomusicological research had been undertaken, nor any study of such

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[13] Tina K. Ramnarine, *Creating Their Own Space: The Development of an Indian-Caribbean Musical Tradition* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2001); Lorna McDaniel, *The Big Drum Ritual of Carriacou* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998); Brenda F. Berrian, *Awakening Spaces - French Caribbean Popular Songs, Music and Culture* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000); Jocelyne Guilbault, *Zouk: World Music in the West Indies* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Katherine J. Hagedorn, *Divine Utterances: The Performance of Afro-Cuban Santería* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001); Gage Averill, *A Day for the Hunter, a Day for the Prey: Popular Music and Power in Haiti* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

length and depth. I also believe that as an outsider I have examined tuk from different perspectives and have therefore reached explanations for tuk's development and recontextualisation not found in existing accounts. This is the first study to follow tuk into the twenty-first century and is also significant in that respect and in that it includes tuk's incorporation into the country's education programme.

## AIMS

I set out to establish, as far as possible, the following:

The history and development of tuk including the role tuk has played in peoples' lives in its various stages of development

The relationship between tuk and the Barbados Landship, a friendly society organisation loosely modelled on the British Royal Navy

Tuk's place in Barbados considering other Barbadian musics, and other Caribbean musics

How tuk has been recontextualised during the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, and tuk's role in Barbadian society today

## METHODOLOGY

Primary and secondary literature searches including newspapers and journals

Fieldwork

Sound recordings

Interviews

Observation

Participation

Ethnomusicology, as defined by Titon, is 'the study of people making music'.[14] Undertaking ethnomusicological research involves drawing on a range of aspects because ethnomusicology brings together anthropological and musicological aspects, as well as aspects of the humanities and social sciences.[15] The skills of an ethnomusicologist are varied and, as well as the usual research skills, the ability to undertake a variety of other tasks such as audio and video recording, and transcription is important. Historical research is essential and particularly with my work on tuk, I have found that what is not documented can be just as revealing as what is documented.

Ethnomusicologists often study the music of a distant culture, which may present problems with access to the field of study and can mean that research expenses are considerable. The ethnomusicologist may choose their field of study because of a particular interest in a culture or music, or as happened with the subject of my master's degree research, a chance encounter with a music. Whatever the reason for choosing the subject of their study, the ultimate aim of the ethnomusicologist is to understand the chosen music in its socio-cultural context, and how they arrive at this is a very individual journey. Undoubtedly much of the research is done through involvement in the field, whether interviewing, observing or participating, and this gives the researcher the opportunity to become involved in the society, a crucial part of understanding why the music is used as it is, how it has developed and what is expressed about the society through the music. The extent to which other avenues of research are undertaken vary according to the nature of the music, the aim of the research and the background of the researcher. Some might

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[14] *Worlds of Music*, p. xxi.
[15] Alan P. Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), pp. 4-7.

focus on learning to play a particular instrument and repertoire for it; others might undertake much transcription and comparison of musics.

A key skill in field research is the art of listening – not just to what people say in response to questions, but also to what they do not say. Listening to conversations can be revealing and bring to light aspects which might never otherwise be discovered. Another key skill is patience. It is important to listen to what people want to tell you. It may not be directly relevant but being a good listener and letting an interviewee talk about what they want to may help put them at ease and encourage them to talk about what you want them to. I have certainly found this strategy useful when interviewing elderly people who love to reminisce about times gone by, and often arrive at the desired information by a rather round about way. All of the people I have interviewed formally have been fully aware of the reason for the interview and have been willing for it to be recorded. Sometimes people have made comments to me that have been very relevant to my work, but because of the nature of the comment, it would not be judicious to name the source. Occasionally I have been asked to stop recording as the interviewee does not want something attributed to them. There have also been comments made casually by people in conversation when it was not possible, or appropriate, to ask their name. Thus some pieces of information have to remain anonymous, though these are far outnumbered by those that are credited.

I have undertaken extensive searches in Barbados and in Britain. In Barbados I have undertaken primary and secondary research at the Department of Archives; the Barbados Museum Library; the Library of the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill; the Bridgetown Public Library; the libraries of the Advocate and Nation

newspapers; and the Barbados Government Information Service. At the Archives and Museum Library some of the materials have suffered from humidity and insect damage, which means that some very old materials are disintegrating and are therefore not usable. The University Library has proved particularly useful for pamphlets, programmes and Government papers as well as a comprehensive collection of texts on Barbados. The Bridgetown Public Library, despite having existed since 1847, is not particularly well stocked and has a fairly small collection of old texts. It does have a small West Indies collection and some holdings of newspapers on microfilm. The Nation News Library holds very useful archives, however access can be very difficult as it only opens for part of the day and advance reservations are essential. It can be almost impossible to book as only a few people are admitted each day, thus it is usually booked up over a week in advance. Gaining access to The Advocate News Library was equally difficult, and a further problem arose in 2001 when I tried to book visits there and was told they had discontinued research services.

I have searched the photographic collections of the Barbados Department of Archives, the Barbados Museum, Barbados Government Information Service and the Barbados National Trust. I also made enquiries with two long established commercial photographers, Cecil Marshall and Willie Alleyne, to see if they had any relevant photographs in their private archives. Searching photographic collections has been interesting, but finding anything of musical interest was rare, and no photographs of tuk bands have been found.

My fieldwork in Barbados has been extensive and I am confident that I have exhausted the potential sources of information available to me in the time I have

spent there, and believe that, short of spending a long period of time living there, I would not be able to uncover any significant further information, either in terms of written documentation or oral testimony. The majority of my time spent in Barbados has involved interviewing people ranging from Government officials to musicians, teachers, pupils and tourists. I have also attended many concerts and musical events to gain an appreciation of all musics in Barbados, not just tuk. My attendance at various festivals has allowed me to observe tuk and other musics, and to participate in Barbadian culture, and to observe Barbadians participating in their culture. This has been invaluable in developing an overview of what they consider to be enjoyable and what is important to them. I have also been interested to observe tourists at such events and their reactions to what they heard and saw.

I have spent some time in Barbados in schools observing music lessons and the Cultural and Historical Exposure for Kids in Schools scheme. I returned to being a student and took some lessons in tuk drumming so I could learn the basic rhythmic patterns used and develop a deeper appreciation of the music. Many evenings were spent following tuk bands performing specifically for tourists at hotels and other venues. At these I observed and talked to the bands, observed the audience reactions to the bands and interviewed members of the audience to gain their impressions, which was an important part of my research.

I have been able to keep up to date with current events in Barbados since I started my research by accessing the *Daily Nation* on the Internet, which has provided a

valuable resource and an insight into developments in the musical life of Barbados, as well as general events.[16]

In Britain I have undertaken primary and secondary research at the University Libraries of Warwick, Birmingham, London (University College, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, Institute of Latin American Studies), Cambridge (including the Royal Commonwealth Society Collection) and Sheffield; The British Library; The British Library Newspaper Library; The National Sound Archive; The Public Record Office and the Commonwealth Institute. The British Library has been an invaluable source of contemporary travel writings and many texts not available elsewhere. The Newspaper Library holds the largest collection of Barbadian newspapers in existence, including the oldest surviving from 1783.

**Problems obtaining materials**

The greatest problem I have encountered in my research is the lack of documentation relating to tuk, which means that its history cannot be accurately researched. Whilst I believe this lack to be generally because there was nothing written, the problems associated with keeping of records in a tropical climate have to be borne in mind. No one can know what has been lost to humidity, insects and general carelessness, and certainly given the attitude towards tuk and associated activities, it is believable that such records, if any existed, were not considered of value and therefore not kept. I suspect however that little was ever written down about tuk as it was not considered worthy by the people who wrote books and in the newspapers (if indeed they were aware of it) and thus much historical information was simply never available. Other problems, such as the loss of

[16] *Daily Nation* can be found at www.nationnews.com

extensive Landship records as a result of a hurricane, point to the losses that can occur even when care has been taken and highlights the ideal situation where, should money be available to do so, all records should be duplicated and stored in separate locations. This is of course a costly and time-consuming exercise, and to duplicate every record kept would be an impossible task. However this should not prevent care being taken with new records to ensure that comprehensive archives are developed. The materials I have gathered together have come from a wide-range of sources and considerable time and effort has been spent in locating many of these, some of which are minute pieces of information that may have been overlooked if more materials had been available.

A key problem has been accessing some sources of information. The problem with the newspaper libraries has already been discussed and, although the British Library Newspaper Library holds the largest collection, theirs stops at 1968, thus Barbados is the only place where later newspapers can be seen. The National Cultural Foundation in Barbados has a library but I have been unable to establish what it contains as gaining access to it has proved impossible.

There are a limited number of recordings of tuk available. There are only two commercial recordings of tuk that have ever been made and they were easily obtained.[17] However, older recordings have proved to be virtually impossible to obtain if indeed they do exist. One recording I have obtained is held at the National Sound Archive (NSA) in London. There are two brief tracks, one of which has a great deal of background noise, possibly being made by an audience. There is no documentation to support this recording other than it is of 'percussion

[17] Ruk-a-Tuk International, *Christmas – Indigenous Tuk Band of Barbados* (1996). Ruk-a-Tuk International, *Indigenous Tuk Band Music of Barbados* (WIRL, WK335, 1991).

and whistle from soundtrack "Spring Hall'". It is possible that the recording was made at Springhall, a village in the northern parish of St Lucy. Other than the track's name, there is no evidence to substantiate this however.[18]

Another recording I have dates from the 1960s. It is of a Landship tuk band and was kindly given to me by Alfred Pragnell, renowned in Barbados as a presenter on Barbados Rediffusion, a wired broadcast service, now defunct. Rediffusion had been active in Barbados since 1934 and I therefore hoped their archives would contain some recordings of tuk. However I am told that in the 1990s, there was a big clear out and most of the archives were actually dumped.[19] There are a number of possible reasons why this happened. Lack of suitable or insufficient storage space could have necessitated the disposal of older materials. Economic pressure may have contributed to a need to create space for purposes other than storage. Staffing problems may have meant insufficient time or expertise was available to look after archive materials properly. There may have been no perceived need to keep such materials as their importance may not have been recognised or valued.

Elombe Mottley, a former director of the National Cultural Foundation, mentioned in a newspaper article that he had made recordings of a tuk band in the 1960s.[20] These tapes included sung tuk, a now obsolete form of tuk. I was very keen to acquire copies of these tapes (if they still exist) and have endeavoured for several years to do so. Unfortunately Mr Mottley now lives in Jamaica and has failed to respond to my correspondence.

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[18] National Sound Archive master tape C881/115, Overseas Film and Television Centre collection. Track also on 1CDR001866.
[19] Conversation with Alfred Pragnell, 25 November 1997.
[20] 'Bumbatuk music and calypso', *Daily Nation*, 1 September 1997. Article found in file of Tuk clippings at Barbados Museum Library, page reference not given.

The Caribbean Broadcasting Company (CBC), the Government-owned radio and television station in Barbados, does not seem to have attached much importance to preserving material. So much so, I have been told by a well-placed informant who prefers to remain anonymous, that their recording of the Independence ceremony in 1966 was recorded over. I have contacted CBC to try to ascertain what recordings, video or audio, they hold of tuk. Officially I was told they do not have anything relevant. However, unofficially, I was told that most of their archives are not catalogued, thus it is not possible to be certain of what there is.

The Barbados Government Information Service was extremely helpful and efficient, and made me a video containing some documentary programmes featuring tuk, and reproduced copies I requested of photographs from their archives, all free of charge. This is in direct contrast to the Barbados Museum who took an order (and payment) from me for a copy of a print in May 2000, and then in August 2001 wrote telling me they were not going to reproduce the print after all. When I visited the museum in February 2001 I had asked to see the print (I had been unable to during my previous visit as the Museum was closed for building work) but it could not be found. I was concerned because the photograph was of a tuk band circa 1900, the oldest photographic evidence of tuk existing, therefore a priceless item to me as a researcher and surely to Barbados' history. I knew of the existence of this print through Lennox Honychurch who had donated an album containing this print to the Museum. Fortunately he had taken copies of all the prints before handing them over, and I am grateful to him for loaning me his copy so I could obtain a copy for use in connection with my research.

I believe this generally reflects the attitude to tuk in Barbados. Whilst people say they are in favour of tuk, in reality they do nothing or very little to help it. A prime example of this is the Chief Executive of the National Cultural Foundation who, during my 2001 field trip, was 'too busy' to give me an interview, in person or on the telephone, despite having been sent a letter requesting an interview over a month in advance. She has also failed to answer a subsequent written request for her views on tuk. It may be however that she does not have the answers to the questions I asked.

Another potentially valuable source of information was the Commonwealth Caribbean Resource Centre's collection of recordings, photographs and newspaper clippings. This was housed at the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies, but has mysteriously disappeared and no one knows where it might be.[21] Indexes reveal that the collection contained interviews with people in the early twentieth century amongst many things, irreplaceable items if they have been thrown away. All these 'lost' resources may have been of little use to me, but may have been invaluable to other researchers, and the fact that they are not available indicates the different attitude to, and value placed on, the preservation of historical documentation in Barbados.

## The Pros and Cons of being an Outsider

The position of being an outsider when undertaking research is, I believe, both positive and negative. The negativity arises for a number of reasons, which can be problematic, such as, in my case, trying to research what is traditionally believed to belong to the black population as an outsider, which may automatically

[21] Dr Richard Allsopp, a Barbadian academic, told me that he has been asking the University for some years to ascertain the location of the collection but without success. Telephone conversation 3 May 2000.

put up barriers. During my research I have encountered a range of attitudes towards tuk and have come up against a good deal of curiosity about what I am doing and indeed why. One member of staff at an institution in Barbados where I was researching expressed disbelief when I explained the subject of my research, asking why I wanted to research tuk as 'it's a low class thing'. Such variations in attitude towards any music, not just tuk, are to be expected, for as Blacking says:

> What turns one man off may turn another man on, not because of any absolute quality in the music itself but because of what the music has come to mean to him as a member of a particular society or social group.[22]

It is, as I will discuss in Chapter 2, pp. 189-93, the social factors that largely influence peoples' perception of tuk.

Some Barbadians have treated me with suspicion, as if not wanting an outsider messing with 'their culture'. Barbadians have been curious as to why someone from England wants to research tuk music. Undoubtedly this is partly because tuk is not held in high esteem by many Barbadians, so it may well be surprising to them that someone from outside would be interested in it. I have also met some who have questioned my motives for doing the research, wondering what I am going to get out of it, and what I am going to give back when I have completed the work. I wonder if an insider would be challenged in such a way.

Others have been willing to share knowledge but first wanting to know what they will get out of it, and others have given of their time and knowledge freely, glad that someone is actually doing something positive to research and document an

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[22] John Blacking, *How Musical is Man?* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973: repr. London: Faber and Faber, 1976), pp. 32-3.

important facet of Barbadian culture. I suspect that all outsiders get similar problems when undertaking fieldwork.

Bruno Nettl describes some scenarios I can relate to in trying to break into the field of study, such as the problem of engaging strangers in conversation in the hope of getting some information or a lead. It can be quite an unnerving experience, perhaps made worse by the knowledge that with a limited amount of time to spend in the field, any missed opportunity is a waste of time. Nettl says of trying to strike up a conversation that 'the great significance of the occasion, so obvious to me, is nothing to them'.[23] That is a feeling I know very well from my fieldwork – whilst I am excited by my work, keen to gather information, enthusiastic to make new contacts and hopeful to find that elusive key piece of information which will give me the answer I am searching for (or even one I am not searching for); some Barbadians have been nonplussed, dismissive, disinterested and unenthusiastic about what I am doing. Fortunately I have also met many who have been keen and enthusiastic, and willing to help however they could.

One of the continuous problems I encountered with my fieldwork was the relaxed attitude of many Barbadians to dealing with correspondence, telephone messages and even appointments. I discovered early in my research that to receive a reply to a letter sent to someone in Barbados is a notable event. After my first field trip I wrote in advance telling people when I was going to be in Barbados, asking them to reserve some time to give me an interview. I often found when I telephoned them when I was in Barbados they had not done so, and were in some cases so busy they could only just fit me in, if they could at all. Obviously people have more

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[23] *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Twenty-nine Issues and Concepts* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), p. 247.

important things to do than give interviews to researchers, but I have found this particularly frustrating when people who have specifically offered to do something for me let me down as I have had an urgent approach to everything because of the limited amount of time I have been able to spend on field trips.

Also frustrating has been the phenomenon known as 'Bajan time' whereby a local will say one time but actually mean an hour or two hours later. I have on many occasions been left waiting for very long periods of time for people to turn up for interviews, and have even had people not turn up at all. Once I waited for two hours for someone and had to leave to go to another appointment, only to be told later that he had turned up and wondered why I did not wait for him.

As I became more accustomed with Barbadian ways I planned my activities to allow for the different approaches to life I encountered. Generally speaking I found it better if I arranged to visit people at their home or place of work, as this reduced the chance of them being held up elsewhere or their transport not turning up for them (a favourite excuse for lateness). I also tried to do everything possible to allow for the speed other people work at and make allowances for this in my schedule.

I have however had many very pleasant experiences and many people have warmly welcomed me and made me feel like an old friend. I have been cooked meals, given lifts and been privileged to view people's photographs and other mementos which, whilst not always relevant to my research, have allowed me to acquaint myself with people on a more personal level, a very important factor in ethnographic research. I have also received whatever assistance I required during

my research trips to the Barbados Museum Library, the Barbados Department of Archives and the Library at the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies. Additionally, the Barbados Museum has generously donated copies of its Journal to assist with my research, and the National Cultural Foundation waived the registration fee for my attendance at the Caribbean Congaline Music Symposium in 2001, for which I am grateful.

One problem encountered by outsiders is that of language. Barbadians speak Barbadian (known as Bajan), which is a mixture of English and African languages; this will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 1, pp. 68-9. Bajan is a creole language, the sound of which can be mystifying to the outsider. Many Barbadians also speak standard Caribbean English. It tends to be the older working-class members of the population who speak only Bajan. Younger generations and those from other classes tend to speak both and switch between them without conscious effort. I recall being surprised when, during my first field trip, I was in the room when my host answered the telephone and suddenly lapsed into Bajan and continued with, to me, an unintelligible conversation. She reverted to English to say something to me, and then reverted to Bajan to continue her conversation. After that I was careful to listen intently to every Bajan conversation I heard to try and acquaint myself with the language.

A further language problem I have encountered has been that of people not understanding my accent. One elderly gentleman, who spoke clear English and who I had no trouble at all understanding, said he couldn't understand me because I sounded 'too English'. Depending on who I have been talking to, I have at times deliberately slowed down the speed I talk at to allow the listener a better chance to

cope with my accent. I have also been careful about how to express myself at times, remembering that American expressions have infiltrated Barbados as much as other aspects of culture, as will be discussed in Chapter 1, pp. 80-1. I have usually been able to deal with the accent issue without any problem, but there have been perhaps a couple of occasions where I have not been able to make myself understood or understand fully what was said to me. This is obviously a problem that a Barbadian would not encounter.

I have encountered a belief in Barbados that people coming from England (and I expect other places) are wealthy. As in any tourist resort this ranges from the usual harassment of tourists by a few locals hoping to make a few easy dollars to those who try to sell you something you do not wish to buy and will verbally abuse you because you do not give in to them. When visiting Barbados on my field trips, I have been expected to take certain items with me for my host (in addition to paying rent). I believe this is common for people returning to or visiting the Caribbean – they are often told 'you can bring' and given a list of items to take for family or friends. In one or two cases where an interviewee has asked for money in return for giving me an interview, this seemed to be because of a mistaken belief that I was either being paid to undertake my research, or that I will become rich through the publication of my findings.

It is possible that a Barbadian undertaking the research I have done may come up with different findings. Obviously this would be expected from the viewpoint of different approaches and personal perspectives, but also I believe from what material a Barbadian would be able to find as an insider, rather than what I could as an outsider. I believe access to certain people would be easier for an insider,

whether through the fact of being a local or simply speaking with a local accent. A major advantage would of course arise from being based in Barbados – having the field on your doorstep is undoubtedly an advantage, especially when someone says they will give you an interview next week but you are leaving this week.

As an outsider I have had some experiences where I believe I have been given appointments or interviews because of the fact that I was from England. In some instances I have felt people have been as keen to question me about matters relating to England as I have been to ask them about tuk. Certainly some people have used the opportunity to ask me to try to find someone in England for them, or to send them something they have not been able to obtain in Barbados. Having a well-known Barbadian scholar as a supervisor has certainly been advantageous and I am sure has opened up doors that I feel might otherwise have remained closed to me. Some people have expressed the view that the work I have been undertaking is long overdue and have therefore been keen to offer whatever assistance they could.

Despite what have felt at times like numerous barriers to my research, this thesis looks at tuk from a fresh viewpoint and, as well as being the first ethnomusicological study of tuk, offers different perspectives and approaches to the research.

## NEWSPAPER SEARCHES

I have undertaken sampling of Barbadian newspapers from 1783 (the earliest surviving editions) to 1966 (the year of Independence) in search of tuk-related items. I looked specifically at the months of January, July, August and December

in every fifth year. These months were chosen because they were the times when tuk bands would have been more active, at and around Christmas and Crop Over. I have also randomly looked at newspapers from other months and years, mainly of eighteenth and nineteenth century newspapers, as these were the ones that produced the most useful information. Searching through Barbadian newspapers has been an extremely time-consuming exercise. In total I have searched through approximately three thousand newspapers. Many are microfilmed, but the poor quality of the newspapers before they were microfilmed means that many of the very old editions are difficult to read, and some have pages or sections missing.

Whilst I have found odd mentions of drums and dances, nowhere have I found a direct reference to tuk until the 1970s. The working classes and their activities were not generally reported on. Where they were referred to, they were generally in reports on court cases or, during the time of slavery, in adverts for runaways. In fact, early newspapers actually contained very little news, and most of that was from England. A complaint was made to the *Barbadian* newspaper in 1843 that it contained little local information, and was answered:

> It is admitted that we sometimes occupy our columns largely with English news, whether of great importance or not, but it should be remembered that many of our subscribers in the Island receive no English papers, and are therefore always anxious to read the news from England.[24]

If this attitude was widespread (which it probably was amongst the English population) then it is not surprising that little evidence can be found of what went on in Barbados. The August Bank Holiday given to celebrate the anniversary of Emancipation Day on 1 August is often mentioned and events held on it reported upon, but the reason for the holiday is almost completely ignored. The fact that

[24] 19 August 1843, p. 3.

unimportant English news was considered more important than local news highlights the general attitude of the people in control of the media and suggests that the newspapers were not intended for the black population.

By the late 1960s newspapers were much more substantial and contained local and overseas news along with adverts, sports news, court notices and entertainment listings, though notably for hotels and clubs, which were certainly not perceived as working class venues. As Barbados prepared for Independence, there was a need to start establishing the country's own identity and the reporting and dissemination of local news and information was important in that respect.

The fact that, by name, tuk does not seem to be mentioned in Barbadian newspapers until the 1970s really reflects its place in society. This fairly recent development can be linked with the post-Independence search for a Barbadian national identity and a growing official acceptance of the heritage of the black population.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

As has already been highlighted, there is very little that has been written on tuk, and notably publications on or including tuk have all been in the last twenty years of the twentieth century. There is no one specific text on tuk and where it has been written about, it is generally in the wider context of Barbadian music.

Historical texts on Barbados are readily available and primary sources such as Richard Ligon's *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes* of 1657, George Pinckard's *Notes on the West Indies* of 1806, and James Alexander's

*Transatlantic Sketches* of 1833, have provided valuable information and background.[25]

Other contemporary accounts based on life in the West Indies include journals such as William Dyott's from 1781-1845, and observations on life such as those made by Mrs Carmichael and published in 1833.[26] There are also numerous travel writings that provide accounts of travel in Africa in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, of the slave trade including the Middle Passage, and of journeys within the Caribbean region. For example, Cruickshank's *Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast of Africa* published in 1853 and Day's *Five Years Residence in the West Indies* published in 1852. Journals of ship's captains and doctors such as those of Thomas Philips of 1693 and 1694, and Alexander Falconbridge in 1788 are also informative.[27]

There are few texts devoted entirely to Barbadian music. There are however general texts and articles where Barbadian music is included. The first specific text is *Folksongs of Barbados* in which a section is devoted to tuk band songs – albeit only the three that were collected in the 1970s when the research that led to

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[25] Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes*, 2nd edn (London: Peter Parker, 1673; repr. London: Frank Cass, 1998). Pinckard, *Notes on the West Indies*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (London: Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, 1816). Alexander, *Transatlantic Sketches*, 2 vols (London: Richard Bentley, 1833).

[26] *Dyott's Diary 1781-1845: A Selection from the Journal of William Dyott, Sometime General in The British Army and Aide-de-Camp to His Majesty King George III,* ed. by Reginald W. Jeffery (London: Archibald Constable, 1907). Mrs Carmichael, *Domestic Manners and Social Condition of the White, Coloured, and Negro Population of the West Indies*, 2 vols (London: Whittaker, Treacher, 1833; repr. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969).

[27] Brodie Cruickshank, *Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast of Africa*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1853; repr. London: Frank Cass, 1966).
Charles W. Day, *Five Years' Residence in the West Indies* (London: Colburn, 1852).
Thomas Philips, 'A Journal of a Voyage from England to Africa, and so forward to Barbadoes, in the years 1693 and 1694' in *A Collection of Voyages and Travels*, ed. by John Churchill, 8 vols (London: Thomas Osborn, 1752), VI, 189-255.
Alexander Falconbridge, 'Account of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa', The Ship Doctor's Narrative in *Slave Ships and Slaving*, ed. by George Francis Dow (Salem: The Marine Research Society, 1927), pp. 134-54.

this book was undertaken. This section of the book provides a brief history and description of the music and its place in Barbadian society along with a comparison to other similar musics elsewhere in the Caribbean. *Folksongs of Barbados* is an important text as it is the only one to document Barbadian folksong, providing lyrics, notation and background information about each song.[28]

In 1985-6 Trevor Marshall, a well-known Barbadian historian published an important seminar paper, *Notes on the History and Evolution of Calypso in Barbados*, in which tuk received a short historical account and suggestions for its role before and after slave emancipation up to the 1980s when tuk started gaining some acceptance. This is also perhaps the first text to acknowledge tuk's importance; as Marshall says, 'the Tuk Band is accepted now as a musical signature for Barbadians'.[29]

In 1988 John Gilmore wrote articles on the Landship and tuk band for the programme of the First International Festival of Street Music held in Glasgow, and for the *New Bajan* magazine.[30] These are historical and informative pieces, important at a time when tuk was being recontextualised.

In the same year Janice Millington-Robertson, a well-known Barbadian musician and music teacher, wrote an article 'Traditional Music: Its Place in Caribbean Tourism' and briefly referred to tuk being integrated into cultural performances.[31]

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[28] Marshall et al., *Folk Songs of Barbados*, pp. 31-4.
[29] *Notes on the History and Evolution of Calypso in Barbados*, Seminar Paper No. 2 (Barbados: Department of History, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, 1985-6), p. 36.
[30] 'Landship and the Tuk Band', *1st International Festival of Street Music Souvenir Brochure* (1988), pp. 23-5. 'Landship and Tuk Band', *New Bajan* (1988), pp. 6-9.
[31] 'Traditional Music: Its Place in Caribbean Tourism' in *Come Mek Me Hol' Yu Han'* (Jamaica: Jamaica Memory Bank, 1988), pp. 29-36.

A further article in 1991 appeared in *Developments in Caribbean Music* with a two-paragraph summary of tuk.[32]

Fraser, Carrington, Forde and Gilmore's comprehensive *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage* published in 1990 includes a brief account of tuk – this is significant for it is firmly placing tuk in the context of Barbados' broader heritage.[33] This text is also a valuable reference work for all things Barbadian. A revised and enlarged edition of this text is due to be published by Macmillan Caribbean in 2003.

Curwen Best's 1995 *Barbadian Popular Music and the Politics of Caribbean Culture,* based on his Ph.D. thesis and revised in 1999, includes an historical and descriptive account of tuk's history and use. There is also some analysis of the music, but Best is not a musician so this is fairly superficial. This book is however important as it is only the second book devoted to Barbadian music to date. An expanded version of the material on tuk appears in Best's 2001 *Roots to Popular Culture*. In this Best parallels the tuk band with the rhythms of Barbadian writers such as Kamau Brathwaite and Bruce St John. In 1995 Best also published an article 'Rhythm of Tuk: A Barbadian Style' in the *Journal of Caribbean History* in which he describes the composition of the tuk band and briefly analyses the music before giving a history of tuk and its connection with the Landship.[34]

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[32] 'Barbados' in *Developments in Caribbean Music*, ed. by Joycelynne Loncke (n.p: Caribbean Inter-Cultural Music Institute, 1991), pp. 36-41.
[33] *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage*, pp. 185-6.
[34] *Barbadian Popular Music and the Politics of Caribbean Culture*, pp. 9-23; *'Banja': excavating inter-facing and re-placing African-Caribbean art*; *Roots to Popular Culture - Barbadian Aesthetics: Kamau Brathwaite to Hardcore Styles* (London: Macmillan Education, 2001), pp. 49-89; 'Rhythm of Tuk: a Barbadian Style', pp. 37-46.

In 1997 Wayne Willock wrote a brief general history of tuk for production in a promotional leaflet, *The History of Tuk Music*, produced by Rotherley Construction, the Barbadian firm at the forefront of tuk sponsorship.[35]

Janice Millington's 1998 contribution on Barbados to the *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music* is an important article placing Barbados' music, including tuk, into a prestigious collection of texts by renowned ethnomusicologists and musicologists.[36]

There have also been small references to tuk in other journals and newspapers but nothing substantial. The earliest one is in an article by J. Graham Cruickshank, 'Negro English, With Reference Particularly to Barbados', published in 1911.[37] This is significant because it connects tuk with slavery, although the evidence cannot be substantiated.

Thus it will be seen that there has been little written on tuk and, with the exception of Millington, none of these writers have any musical training. The only work on early Barbadian music was undertaken by anthropologists Jerome Handler and Charlotte Frisbie and published in 1972. This specifically focuses on slaves and describes their instruments, music and dance.[38]

Elizabeth Watson's groundbreaking work in compiling discographies of Barbadian calypsonians John King and The Informer forms the first two books in a collection

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[35] Wayne Willock, *The History of Tuk Music* (Barbados: Rotherley Construction, 1997).
[36] 'Barbados' in *South America, Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean*, pp. 813-21.
[37] J. Graham Cruickshank, 'Negro English, With Reference Particularly to Barbados', *Timehri*, 3rd series, 1 (1911), 102-6.
[38] Jerome S. Handler and Charlotte J. Frisbie, 'Aspects of Slave Life in Barbados: Music and its Cultural Context', *Caribbean Studies*, 2 (1972), 5-46.

entitled the Barbadian Popular Music Series.[39] A third discography, *Mr Ragga Ragga: Red Plastic Bag – Stedson Wiltshire, 1982-2002*, was due to be published in the same series in November 2002.[40]

Secondary sources are more extensive and include official publications, manuscripts, books, journals and theses. There are many texts on the history of Barbados and aspects of Barbadian life such as Hilary Beckles' *A History of Barbados: From Amerindian Settlement to Nation-State* and Gmelch and Gmelch's *The Parish behind God's Back: The Changing Culture of Rural Barbados.*[41] There are numerous articles in journals such as the *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society* and *The Journal of Caribbean Studies*, which have been informative, such as Edwina Ashie-Nikoi's article on *Cohobblopot*, which is an important contribution to the documentation of the Crop Over festival, a significant part of modern Barbadian culture.[42] Aviston Downes' article, 'Sailing from Colonial into National Waters: A History of the Barbados Landship', is the most comprehensive and up-to-date account of the Landship, and has been a useful resource.[43]

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[39] Elizabeth F. Watson, *From "Ma Boy" to a King: John King, 1982-1998: an Annotated Discography of Popular Music from Barbados* (Barbados: Research Riddims, 1999). Ibid., *The Informer: Leland Maloney, 1984-1997: An Annotated Discography of Popular Music from Barbados* (Barbados: Research Riddims, 2000).

[40] Personal correspondence with Elizabeth Watson, 20 March 2002, 1 September 2002.

[41] Hilary Beckles, *A History of Barbados: From Amerindian Settlement to Nation-State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); George Gmelch and Sharon Bohn Gmelch, *The Parish behind God's Back: The Changing Culture of Rural Barbados* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997)

[42] 'Cohobblopot: Africanisms in Barbadian Culture through the Lens of Crop-Over', *Journal of Caribbean History*, 32 (1998), pp. 82-120

[43] 'Sailing from Colonial into National Waters: A History of the Barbados Landship', *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society*, 46 (2000), 93-122

There are a range of texts on different Caribbean musics which are informative and provide valuable comparisons. Some of these have been mentioned earlier, p. 10, others will be referenced where appropriate in this thesis.

## SUMMARY

The research undertaken for this thesis has not been straightforward for a number of reasons. Being limited to short, intense periods in the field has presented some problems, but nevertheless significant findings have been made. The lack of relevant and scholarly resources has also been problematic. At times in my thesis I speculate about possible origins and theories for the development of subjects discussed. This is unusual in doctoral work, but is essential for this thesis for two reasons. Firstly, the absence of written scholarship on relevant matters. Secondly, the limited oral evidence available as many people offer limited interpretations, particularly as the nationalistic mood is to identify closely with Africa and African-derived culture.

The first chapter of this thesis provides the historical framework for modern Barbados, exploring the major influences that have shaped the country, its people and its culture. It also suggests reasons for the development of a Barbadian national identity in the post-Independence period. The second chapter focuses on tuk. Part 1 examines the history of tuk, including that of the musics that have been syncretized to form tuk. Part 2 examines the instruments, repertoire and types of tuk as well as drawing parallels with similar musics in the Caribbean and the United States of America. Part 3 examines the contemporary tuk scene, notably the musicians and what has happened to tuk during the last thirty years of the twentieth century and what is happening to tuk early in the twenty-first century.

Chapter 3 considers the history and development of the Barbados Landship, a cultural phenomenon inextricably bound up with the tuk band. Possible reasons for the development of both are explored and parallels are drawn with similar organisations elsewhere. Chapter 4 examines the contemporary Barbadian music scene, exploring the musics that are commonly found today, as well as some of the many festivals held each year in order to provide perspective on how tuk fits into Barbados' musical and cultural life. In the Conclusion I draw together the key elements from each of the chapters and offer my own interpretation of the history, development and recontextualisation of tuk.

# Chapter 1

# BARBADOS: HISTORY AND PEOPLE

## INTRODUCTION

The first part of this chapter explores the history of Barbados and its people. Reasons for, and consequences of colonisation, the introduction of sugar, the mass importation of African slaves, the establishment of a British military garrison on the island, and slave Emancipation are examined as these provide essential background to understanding the Barbados of today. The second part examines developments in Barbadian society during the twentieth century, particularly in the post-Independence era. Barbadian culture and perspectives on national identity are explored as they form an essential part of this thesis and of how and why tuk has been recontextualised.

## PART 1

## EARLY HISTORY

The first inhabitants of Barbados were Amerindian peoples who travelled through the Caribbean from the Americas.[1] Precisely when Barbados was first inhabited is not known, but archaeological evidence points to Amerindian settlements having been made there well over a thousand years before Columbus 'discovered' the New World. Substantial finds of pottery and other artefacts have been found on the island evidencing that Amerindians lived on the island for around five hundred years but why they disappeared is uncertain.

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[1] 'Amerindians' refers to the aboriginal peoples of the Americas. Richard Hart, *From Occupation to Independence: A Short History of the Peoples of the English-speaking Caribbean Region* (London: Pluto Press, 1998), p. 1; Hilary Beckles, *A History of Barbados: From Amerindian Settlement to Nation-State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 1. Other useful sources include: Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (London: Cornell University Press, 1982); Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies 1624-1713* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1973); Richard Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes*, 2nd edn (London: Peter Parker, 1673; repr. London: Frank Cass, 1998); Karl Watson, 'The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (with special reference to Barbados)', *Emancipation I*, ed. by A. O. Thompson (Barbados: Department of History, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, and Barbados National Cultural Foundation, 1986), pp. 16-25.

There are a number of theories for the naming of Barbados, none of which can be substantiated. What is known is that from 'early in the sixteenth century, the island was known to the Spaniards as Los Barbudos, or something very similar'.[2]

## The English Colonisation

In 1625 an English ship, the *Olive Blossom*, returning to England from Brazil called at the island and took possession of it in the name of King James I, erecting a cross at a site on the west coast, now known as Holetown, as a sign of the English claim to the island. Barbados was reported to be uninhabited and ideal for colonisation, being well suited to agriculture. In 1627 a colonising expedition financed by London merchants arrived with around ten African slaves they had captured from a Spanish ship en route and landed at the same site on the west coast from where settlement of the island began.

The foundations for a divided Barbadian society were firmly laid during the early years of settlement with only the foremost white members of society allowed to play a role in political life, maintaining the hierarchies of English society. The Earl of Carlisle, holder of a royal patent granted in 1627 to settle Barbados, made sure that those allocated land had good financial and social connections in England, so that a small elite owned most of the land and were influential in many ways on the island, particularly if they became officers in militia regiments.

Barbados grew tobacco from the early years of its settlement and established a successful export trade. However, vast quantities of tobacco were also being grown in Virginia, and elsewhere in the Caribbean, and the market became

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[2] P. F. Campbell, *Some Early Barbadian History* (Wildey, Barbados: Caribbean Graphics & Letchworth, 1993), p. 6. See pp. 5-10 for a full discussion of the various theories.

saturated and inevitably prices declined. English Government restrictions, imposed in 1631 to restrict the level of tobacco planting in Barbados, did not deter the colonists and they continued to grow tobacco even though its quality was by that time considered inferior to that produced elsewhere.[3] The Barbadians realised that they could not rely solely on tobacco and introduced cotton as an alternative crop. This was in high demand and fetching high prices in Europe, which encouraged more English planters in the Caribbean to produce it. Inevitably supply exceeded demand, prices fell, and by 1640 many small planters were ruined, and the larger ones were left to find yet another alternative crop. Over the next few years various crops were tried, but ultimately it was the advent of the sugar industry that proved to be the island's salvation.[4]

## Labour

Small numbers of non-whites lived on the island from its earliest settlement. There were the Africans who arrived with the colonising expedition as well as some 'Indians' (indigenous Guyanese) brought in from Guyana.[5] The Indians were initially supposed to be free people who would teach the English settlers the art of agriculture in the tropics and their knowledge of the geography of the area. They were treated preferentially to the blacks who worked in the fields, whereas the Indians worked as fishermen and servants in the plantation houses. However from 1636 all blacks and Indians taken to Barbados, and their children, were considered to be life-long slaves, thus providing a better investment for their owners than indentured servants who were contracted to them for only a limited period.

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[3] Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 14.
[4] Ibid., pp. 13-5.
[5] Ibid., pp. 18-9. Guyana was known as British Guiana until 1966 when it became independent.

During the early years of tobacco and cotton production (1627 to early 1640s), the planters relied upon labour sourced from England, Scotland and Ireland. This labour took the form of thousands of indentured servants who went to Barbados for a contract period of up to seven years in return for their passage and subsistence, and a piece of land or a sum of money at the end of their contract. The planters regarded these servants as a form of investment and they were sometimes used as commodities to settle debts. The servants answered to their master for the duration of their indentureship and had to seek his permission to leave the plantation.

During Cromwell's regime in the 1650s, extra numbers of indentured servants were available – political prisoners and convicts among them. Sending the undesirable element of society to the colonies as indentured servants was seen as a suitable way of disposing of them. To meet the demand in the colonies, some indentured servants were obtained by effectively kidnapping people off the street and shipping them to where needed. For those sent to Barbados this was known as being 'barbadosed' and according to Dunn, 'when the white servants found themselves toiling in the same field gangs with black slaves, they became wild and unruly in the extreme'.[6] Such anger no doubt contributed to a planned servant rebellion which had just been thwarted when Richard Ligon arrived on the island in 1647, and was one reason why planters built their houses 'in manner of Fortifications [...] to defend themselves, in case there should be any uproar or commotion in the island, either by the Christian servants, or Negro slaves'.[7]

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[6] Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 69.
[7] Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes*, pp. 29 and 45-6.

## Sugar and Slavery

A key factor in the development of the Barbadian sugar industry was civil war in Brazil between the Dutch commercial masters and Portuguese settlers. Brazil supplied around three quarters of Europe's sugar and the war seriously affected this as many of the Dutch were forced to leave Brazil. Some settled in Barbados, some went to other colonies.[8] The Dutch applied their skills and knowledge of sugar production to the establishment of the sugar industry in Barbados. In so doing, the Dutch were creating a market for themselves for slaves and equipment. The Dutch were successful shippers of produce to Europe and were the main suppliers of African slaves to the Americas and West Indies, and they, unlike the English, had a West African slave-trading base.

The Dutch also introduced windmills into Barbados for crushing sugar cane. The sugar industry came to depend on these and every plantation had at least one mill. The extent to which windmills once dominated the island can be seen today from the large numbers of surviving mill-walls. Economics favoured larger landholders because of the capital outlay required to process sugar. The machinery was expensive, requiring large production to justify the expenditure and poor transportation on the island meant that processing had to be done close to where the cane was cut to avoid the deterioration of the cane.[9]

By the mid-1640s Barbados' sugar industry was established and much money was being made. Many of the planters made large fortunes and the most successful received honours such as knighthoods. Some of these had estates, which were passed down many generations, such as the Drax estate, which retains family

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[8] Hart, *From Occupation to Independence*, p. 15.
[9] Ibid., p. 15.

connections today. This was founded by James Drax who went to Barbados in the late 1620s and by the mid-1650s held a seven hundred acre estate and was known to be the richest planter in Barbados.[10] By the second half of the seventeenth century Barbados was the chief producer of sugar in the region.[11] However by 1720, Jamaica and the Leeward islands produced more sugar and Barbados lost its lead position in the region.[12]

Although thousands of miles away, events in England had significant repercussions in Barbados, particularly the English Civil War, which caused considerable upheaval in the colony. To quell the upheaval, Charles II revoked the Earl of Carlisle's patent in 1660 and Barbados acquired a royally-appointed Governor who maintained loyalty to the crown whilst the Barbadian upper class enjoyed significant powers of self-government and the control of their financial policies.[13] The elite planters, who controlled large plantations and owned numerous slaves, enjoyed a dominant role in all aspects of society due to their wealth and status.

As the sugar industry grew so did the demand for servants and therefore their price, which meant the smaller planters struggled financially. Requests to London to provide more indentured servants were unsuccessful, which led to laws to moderate prices and to encourage merchants to bring servants to Barbados to sell. This worked to a certain extent but outside forces meant the merchants increased their prices and, paralleled with a decrease in slave prices, this meant that indentured servants were no longer a more attractive option than slaves who

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[10] Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 21.
[11] Eric Williams, *From Columbus to Castro: The History of the Caribbean 1492-1969* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1970; repr. New York: Vintage Books, 1984), pp. 112-3.
[12] Beckles, ibid., pp. 27-8.
[13] Ibid., p. 26.

were not subject to a limited number of years' service, as were the indentured servants. The development of plantations in other islands also drained the number of servants available to go to Barbados, plus the fact that land was often offered to them at the end of their contract in other colonies – this could not happen to any great extent in Barbados due to the comparatively small size of the island.

These circumstances led to the Barbadian planters, with the help of the Dutch, becoming involved in the African slave trade. Many of the hundreds of thousands of slaves who were taken from West Africa did not survive the appalling conditions of the Middle Passage, the voyage across the Atlantic from Africa to the New World. Those that did were sold at markets like any form of commodity. Over a hundred thousand Africans were taken to Barbados before 1700 and as the black population increased the number of indentured servants decreased.

The exact origins of the African slaves are not clear because the traders banded together different peoples from different areas under one name. Also the ports or areas from where the ships sailed were sometimes used to describe the slaves' origins rather than the slaves' actual geographical place of origin. However, Karl Watson says that his research 'confirms that the core nucleus of the black Barbadian population lies among the Akan peoples of Ghana (Ashanti, Fante, Coromantin)'.[14] In Barbados, Africans were mixed together so as to ensure there were not too many from one area of origin together who could cause trouble. This also contributed to the creolization process as relationships between slaves from different areas of origin produced the next generation of slaves. By the early

[14] 'The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade', p. 20.

nineteenth century only a tiny minority of slaves were African-born, the rest were creole.[15]

As the planters became increasingly outnumbered by Africans, they felt a need to protect themselves against possible uprisings. Many slaves were rebellious and wished to take action to free themselves and so conspired to overthrow the white planters, and there were unsuccessful slave rebellions in 1649, 1679 and 1692. Punishment meted out to those found guilty of such activity included execution and being burnt alive. The bodies of those executed were paraded through the streets as a warning to other would-be troublemakers. To protect themselves against the slaves, the indentured servants and possible attack from other European colonisers such as the French and the Spanish, the planters took various measures such as the establishment of the militia, which will be discussed fully later in this chapter, pp. 53-5. The militia were allowed to search slave houses and confiscate any weapons found. Like the indentured servants, slaves had to obtain a signed pass from their master before being allowed to leave the plantation.

Laws, such as the 1688 'Act for the Governing of Negroes', were passed that dictated what slaves could and could not do, that their masters were responsible for housing, feeding and clothing them, and what punishments could be meted out

[15] The term creole has different meanings in different parts of the Caribbean region. It may be used to describe a particular group of a country's population. It is also used to describe a pidgin language that has become the native language of a population group. For this thesis I will use it to refer to people born, or something created, in Barbados or the West Indies. The term creolization will be used to refer to the process undergone by people of different origins and their cultures to produce a new culture. For a full discussion of these terms see, for example, John Gilmore, *Faces of the Caribbean* (London: Latin America Bureau, 2000), p. 162; Edward Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica 1770-1820* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. xiv-xv; Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 57-9.

to slaves.[16] There was no attempt at this time to Christianise the slaves, they were considered too heathen for this and as reported by Père Labat in 1700, 'the overseers get every ounce of work out of them, beat them without mercy for the least fault, appear to care less for the life of a Negro than for a horse'.[17] There were rare exceptions to such treatment of slaves. Thomas Philips, the commander of a ship called the *Hannibal*, noted in his journal during a voyage carrying a cargo of slaves, that he chose not to harm slaves who 'excepting their want of Christianity and true religion (their misfortune more than fault) are as much the work of God's hands, and no doubt as dear to him as ourselves'.[18]

During the 1660s and 1670s, a number of catastrophes struck Barbados including a large fire in Bridgetown; a drought, followed by an epidemic; and in 1675 a hurricane which wreaked considerable damage on homes, crops and plantation buildings. In the wake of these events economic conditions were unstable and many of the smaller planters left Barbados in search of their fortune elsewhere. Many of the elite left managers in charge of their plantations and returned to England to enjoy their wealth, titles and increased social status. This wealth would not have been amassed but for the exploitation of the thousands of African slaves who worked on the plantations. Those that remained kept the island in working order, though the boom of the early years of sugar production did not return in quite the same way.

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[16] Act 329, dated 8 August 1688, *Acts of Assembly passed in the Island of Barbadoes from 1648, to 1718* (London: John Baskett, 1721).
[17] *The Memoirs of Père Labat 1693-1705*, ed. by John Eaden (London: Frank Cass, 1970), p. 126.
[18] Thomas Philips, 'A Journal of a Voyage from *England* to *Africa*, and so forward to *Barbadoes* in the years 1693 and 1694' in *A Collection of Voyages and Travels,* ed. by John Churchill, [illegible] (London: Thomas Osborn, 1752), VI, pp. 189-255 (p. 231).

After the 1807 'Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade' was passed, the slaves intensified their demands for improved conditions for themselves and were increasingly impatient for freedom. In 1816 another slave rebellion occurred, famously known as 'Bussa's Rebellion' in honour of one of the slaves instrumental in its organisation. Bussa was a slave on Bayleys Plantation where, according to Beckles, 'he was the principal enslaved worker and enjoyed privileges which corresponded with his rank as head ranger'.[19] It was this senior position that gave him, and his counterparts on other plantations, respect among fellow slaves. The island-wide rebellion to overthrow their owners was pre-planned by the slaves but was effectively over within three days, put down by the militia and the British troops stationed on the island, whose role will be discussed later in this chapter, pp. 53-6.

## Social Structure

As early as the end of the seventeenth century a well-established social structure existed in Barbados, although the fact that by this time blacks outnumbered whites by three to one was a matter of some concern.[20] There were the whites, with the plantation owners at the top of the ladder, followed by the plantation managers or overseers, then the other whites employed on the plantations such as bookkeepers. Also in the higher divisions of white society were the doctors, clergymen, lawyers and merchants. Lower down came the craftsmen and small businessmen and below them, at the bottom, were the poor whites.

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[19] Hilary McD. Beckles, *Bussa – The 1816 Revolution in Barbados* (Barbados: Department of History, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill and The Barbados Museum and Historical Society, 1998), p. 16.
[20] Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 42.

The plantation owner lived in grand style in a large house, often known as the great house, emulating the country houses of England of the period, cared for by numerous servants. Compared to their contemporary counterparts in England however the houses were small and lacking acres of well-manicured gardens. The houses were nevertheless filled with fine furniture, and the best in food and wine graced the dinner table served on fine china and crystal brought over from England. They also had well-stocked stables, and the planters wore the latest in fashions from London, even though these were usually totally unsuitable for the tropical climate of Barbados. In short, the planters lived the life of the English country gentleman in a foreign land. The manager and other white employees of the plantation lived in smaller houses on the plantation, often close to the factory buildings. The indentured servants lived on the plantation, but separate to the slaves.

Lower down the white social ladder was the poor white community, which was comprised of former indentured servants and their descendants.[21] There was little work available to them after the mass importation of slaves, and the poor whites had to make what living they could from their land. The Act passed in 1702 that regulated the militia in Barbados provided opportunity for some of the poor whites to find worthwhile occupation as militia tenants, which will be discussed later in this chapter, pp. 54-5, although they seemed to do little else. In reality they were not able to compete for physically demanding jobs being unable or unwilling to toil under the tropical sun and increasingly becoming susceptible to disease. Their

[21] Allsopp defines poor white as 'any descendant [...] of the earliest generations of seventeenth century white plantation labourers from the British Isles, who have stayed socially isolated, generally poor and despised, and sometimes showing effects of inbreeding'. *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage*, ed. by Richard Allsopp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 449.

pale skin was often red from exposure to the sun, which earned them the name 'Redlegs', a name often used to identify the poor white population of Barbados. [22]

Another sector of society were the 'free coloured people'. This group included free blacks as well as those of mixed racial origins, who were often the result of liaisons between plantation owners and their female slaves. Although children born to slaves were automatically life-long slaves themselves, many mixed race offspring were given their freedom in the wills of their masters, or earned freedom through good service. Others were freed with their mothers as payment for services rendered. Slaves were also freed for good service, and the number of free coloured and black people steadily increased.

Although 'free', the free coloured people did not enjoy the same rights as the free white people. They did not choose to work on plantations because of the association with slavery, but some undertook agriculture on a small scale. Others learned trades or opened shops, and by the late eighteenth century some had even become plantation owners. Some free coloured women became property owners and businesswomen of repute, running inns and hotels in Bridgetown, some providing a façade for brothels where the female slaves were able to earn enough money to buy their freedom.[23] The free coloured people who did well emulated the lifestyle of the rich white population and lived in well-appointed houses, kept servants to look after them, kept their own horses, and assumed the customs of the elite of white society.

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[22] For a full discussion of poor whites see Jill Sheppard, *The Redlegs of Barbados, their Origins and History* (New York: KTO Press, 1977).

[23] See Pedro L. V. Welch and Richard A. Goodridge, *"Red" & Black Over White: Free Coloured Women in Pre-Emancipation Barbados* (Bridgetown: Carib Research and Publications, 2000) and Jerome S. Handler, *The Unappropriated People: Freedmen in the Slave Society of Barbados* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974)

The slave population were all considered to be beneath any of the white and coloured population, but also had some form of social hierarchy. The slaves at the top of their hierarchy were those who possessed some skill or craft, and those who were of some standing in African society. Next came the slaves who worked in the plantation house, whilst those who worked in the field were at the bottom of the hierarchy. There was also an element of status afforded by the status of the slave's owner – the higher in society a plantation owner was, the higher the status afforded to his slaves over those of other plantations. The status of the plantation owner would be determined by the size of his plantation and the number of slaves he owned (and therefore his wealth). Dunn says that one slave was held for every two acres of land, and one servant for every seventeen slaves.[24]

The slaves lived in tiny huts, usually made from wattle and daub with a roof often made from cane trash, and dirt floors. These were grouped together in a village located close to the great house and mill, presumably close enough so that the plantation management could keep an eye on what the slaves were doing and so reduce potential opportunities for them to cause any trouble. On some plantations, next to or surrounding the huts, were plots of land, which were provided for the slaves to grow food crops. On other plantations, a field located away from the village, known as the 'Negro ground' was provided for this purpose.[25] They were given an allowance of clothing, which was generally insufficient for their needs, and it was often the case that they sold produce from their land to buy necessary items. Because the slaves came from various African societies it became necessary for them to establish new groupings and this tended to be by geographical areas of Africa. Those that had similar languages that could

[24] Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 89.
[25] Jerome S. Handler, 'An Archaeological Investigation of the Domestic Life of Plantation Slaves in Barbados' in *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society*, 34 (1972), 64-72 (p. 69).

be understood by each other would naturally group together and often formed themselves in village-type arrangements by these groups. This contributed to the creolization process whereby new cultural identities and behavioural patterns developed. This process may have started before the slaves arrived in Barbados, possibly in the West African slaving ports, or during the Middle Passage whilst they were forced together in confined spaces.

The slaves were essential to the plantation's success and were therefore valuable assets. Unfortunately the conditions the slaves lived and worked in were not conducive to good health and a high mortality rate was not uncommon. Overwork, poor housing and disease were the most common causes of death and so the importation of slaves continued in vast numbers.

Barbados was different to other English sugar colonies in that women dominated the population for quite some time.[26] The fact that women were key in agricultural societies in Africa meant that they were well-suited to working on the plantations and were expected to work the same hours on the plantation as did the men, except when they were pregnant. During pregnancy and lactation women were given slightly reduced working hours and an increased allowance of food. They were in some cases offered money as an incentive to produce children. There was an increased awareness that, if the slaves could produce offspring who would by law be born into lifelong slavery, the planters would become self-sufficient in their workforce and no longer need to spend money purchasing slaves from Africa.

[26] Watson states that throughout the eighteenth century 'women outnumbered men, the percentages being approximately 52% women to 48% men'. 'The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade', p. 21.

The slaves worked six days a week and were allowed Sundays off, as well as the major Christian holidays of Christmas and Easter.[27] This time was generally spent in the cultivation of foodstuffs on the small areas of land they were allowed, and particularly in activities such as singing and dancing.

There were some efforts to prevent slaves moving between plantations without permission from their owners. The 1688 Act cautioned against allowing slaves to wander around and meet each other 'at all times, more especially on *Saturday* nights, *Sundays* and other Holy-days'.[28] However planters slowly became tolerant of such activity, gradually realising that 'by granting slaves concessions [...] most would behave in a manner conducive to social stability and high levels of productivity'.[29] Beckles and Watson say that from the early eighteenth century the planters were allowing slaves 'to traverse the extremities of the island on weekends to attend dances and markets, and maintain a myriad of social relations', and that a more relaxed approach to slave management 'allowed individual planters [...] to adopt policies sensitive to some demands of slaves'.[30] Such an approach may have contributed to the perpetuation of certain African customs and traditions.

## Slaves and Religion

In West Africa different elements make up the religious practices of the different peoples. These usually include the belief in a supreme God, the belief in lesser gods, the belief in ancestral spirits and the practice of magic and medicine. The

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[27] Hilary McD. Beckles, *Natural Rebels: A Social History of Enslaved Black Women in Barbados* (London: Zed Books, 1989) p. 36.
[28] 'An act for the Governing of Negroes', Act 329, 8 August 1688, *Acts of Assembly passed in the Land of Barbados from 1648-1718*, p. 119.
[29] Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 57.
[30] Hilary Beckles and Karl Watson, 'Social Protest and Labour Bargaining: The Changing Nature of Slaves' Responses to Plantation Life in 18th Century Barbados', *Slavery and Abolition*, 8 (1987), 272-93 (pp. 274-5).

supreme God, who is believed to be responsible for the creation of everything, is not associated with day-to-day matters, and only occasionally are offerings made, or rituals held for him. The lesser gods serve the supreme God and are believed to mediate between him and humans. The ancestral spirits are believed to continue to play an important role in the running of family and society affairs, and offerings are made to them. The practice of magic and medicine is undertaken to obtain what is not obtainable in the usual way.

The traditional West African religions are passed on in the oral tradition, and participation at ceremonies and rituals is an important way of learning. Unlike a number of other religions, they do not have identifiable founders, but have developed over a long period of time, and the practices and beliefs that are useful are kept, whilst others may be discontinued. Mbiti says that 'religious rituals, ceremonies and festivals are always accompanied by music, singing and sometimes dancing. Music gives outlet to the emotional expression of the religious life'.[31] Music within religious practices may include drumming, the playing of instruments, and call and response style chanting or singing, and has a specific purpose, for example, summoning the spirits by drumming special rhythms as found in Yoruba and Dahomeyan ceremonies.[32]

The spiritual life of the slaves was not an easy one. They practised, where possible, the African belief in Obeah with its medicinal, magical and religious practices until it was banned by law in 1806.[33] The plantocracy were afraid of Obeah, which they regarded as black magic, and the religious aspect was

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[31] John S. Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion* (Oxford: Heinemann International, 1975), pp. 24, 61.
[32] John Storm Roberts, *Black Music of Two Worlds* (London: Penguin Books, 1973), p. 6.
[33] Karl Watson, *The Civilised Island: Barbados A Social History 1750-1816* (St George, Barbados: Caribbean Graphic Production, 1979), pp. 87-8.

considered to be pagan.[34] It was however practised in secret by some slaves and was successfully passed down the generations to a few surviving practitioners today.

However, the slaves largely remained ignorant of Christian teaching since the plantocracy feared that educating slaves would cause them to be dissatisfied with their lot. The established Anglican Church initially had little part in the slaves' lives and it was only when Christian missionaries from other churches started arriving in Barbados that any systematic effort to teach the slaves about Christianity was made.[35] Both Anglican clergy and those of other denominations taught slaves their African customs were heathen and un-Christian, thereby reinforcing the beliefs and values of white society, and planting the seeds of future prejudices against anything to do with Africa. The Anglican Church did however begin to make greater efforts to convert slaves from the 1820s in preparation for Emancipation.[36]

## Military

### The Militia

Up to 1780 Barbados was defended by the militia comprising of officers from the elite planters and men drawn from other whites, such as plantation overseers, indentured servants, free white and coloured men and slaves. Though slave

[34] H. Fraser et al., *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage* (Kingston: Heinemann Caribbean, 1990), p. 123.
[35] Moravians first arrived in 1765, Methodists in 1788. Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 88.
[36] For a full discussion of this see J. T. Gilmore, *Episcopacy, Emancipation and Evangelization: Aspects of the History of the Church of England in the British West Indies* (doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 1984).

involvement was limited this presented 'opportunities to interact with and observe whites', which may have led to slaves' assimilation of white practices.[37]

The highest positions in a regiment were reserved for the most elite (usually the richest) of the planters. The junior officers would be of reasonably high standing but with small plantations. A minimum of a hundred acres was required to become a militia field officer, but all adult males aged 16-60 were required to serve and to provide themselves with the appropriate equipment. In 1700 Labat reports watching a revue of the country's cavalry and infantry numbering 'four companies of cavalry each containing 126 riders with their drummers and trumpeters. They were all well mounted and well armed.' The infantry also had four companies numbering around 200 men. He went on to comment 'all the wealthy men, and there are plenty of them in Barbados, are in the Cavalry'.[38]

As well as defending the planters and their interests, the militia acted as a social institution mirroring 'the hierarchical nature of a society based irrevocably on race, class, and the planters' love of rank and position'.[39] Perhaps a love of matters ceremonial is reflected in the fact that militiamen undertook ceremonial duties such as providing a guard for special occasions, and went on parade every four weeks in wartime and every eight in peacetime.[40] Every plantation owner was required to send men to serve, the number relative to how much land he owned. This requirement was sometimes fulfilled by militia tenants. These were often poor whites for whom there were few employment opportunities. In return for serving in

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[37] Jerome S. Handler, 'Freedmen and Slaves in the Barbados Militia' in *Journal of Caribbean History*, 19 (1984), 1-25 (p. 20).
[38] *The Memoirs of Père Labat*, p. 125.
[39] Roger Norman Buckley, *The British Army in the West Indies* (Gainesville: University Press of Gainesville, 1998), p. 52.
[40] P. F. Campbell, 'The Barbados Militia 1627-1815' in *George Washington's Visit to Barbados 1751*, ed. by Richard B. Goddard (Wildey, Barbados: Cole's Printery, 1997), pp. 175-92 (p. 184).

the militia, the tenant was allotted a certain amount of plantation land on which to grow crops and keep animals to feed himself and his family, and to sell small quantities for cash. However by the late seventeenth century there was difficulty in amassing enough white men and it was noted that the Barbadians were 'already enforced to arm part of their blackmen'.[41] Militia muster rolls of 1747 reveal that of a total number of 4,929 men, 2,829 blacks were sent on alarms.[42] This is, however, a much more significant number than 'part of their blackmen'. Handler says that 'throughout slavery, freedmen were expected to serve in the island's militia, and [...] that this service constituted an important and positive aspect of their self-image as freemen and citizens'.[43]

**The British Army**

From the mid-seventeenth century there were visits of varying lengths for various purposes by British soldiers, particularly for the use of Barbados as an advance station for the manoeuvres against the French. In 1780 British troops were sent to Barbados to defend the island and to recapture other Eastern Caribbean islands that had been taken by the French. At the time Britain was persistently at war with France and the help provided to the army by the Barbadians was very valuable in terms of accommodation, food, volunteers and the provision of slaves for manual labour. Creating a garrison there not only established a permanent base in the West Indies for the British army, but was also a symbol of the strategic importance of Barbados and the West Indies to the Atlantic economy. London merchants had invested vast amounts of money in plantations and trade with the West Indies and

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[41] The President and Council of Barbadoes to the Council for Trade and Plantations, 28 May 1673, *Calendar of State Papers, (Colonial Series, America and West Indies)*, Vol. 7, Item 1098 (London: Colonial Office) p. 494.
[42] Richard Hall, 'A General Account of the First Settlement and of the Trade and Constitution of the Island of Barbados', in *George Washington's Visit to Barbados 1751*, ed. by Richard B. Goddard, p. 68.
[43] Handler, *The Unappropriated People*, p. 114.

they were worried that France, or some other colonising country, might take control of Barbados and they would then lose their investment. Because of the influence of the London merchants and that of the planters, the authorities in London needed to provide protection for the island. Considerable fortifications were built along the west coast to protect against foreign invasion and the fact that Barbados was never invaded and taken by another coloniser is testimony to the precautions taken. With the establishment of a permanent garrison on the island, Barbados developed quite a military character. The first barracks were built at St Anne's Fort, but later more extensive barracks were constructed, including a hospital and a parade ground, the Garrison Savannah, which is still in use today. Barbados became the headquarters for British forces in the West Indies and the general in command lived in style at King's House in what is now Queen's Park in Bridgetown, a short distance from the Garrison. St Anne's Fort was the nucleus of military activity on the island and maintained contact with strategic parts of the island via signal stations situated on high points of the island. These stations were used to convey messages and information about possible invasions, slave uprisings or the arrival of ships. The cost of building fortifications was borne in part by the planters, whether through financial contributions from the local legislature or the provision of slaves as manpower.

## The Lead up to Emancipation

In the late eighteenth century British abolitionists were condemning the slave trade as being inhumane and un-Christian, and some slave-owners sought to improve the conditions of their slaves in an attempt to offset the abolitionists' arguments.[44] It took considerable effort and determination on the part of the abolitionists but, led

[44] For a full discussion of abolition see, for example, Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery 1776-1848* (London: Verso, 1988).

by William Wilberforce, who unstintingly put forward in the British Parliament measures for the abolition of the slave trade, eventually, in 1807, abolition was achieved.

Africans were imported into Barbados until the early years of the nineteenth century despite the fact that Barbados was by that time self-sufficient in maintaining a supply of slaves through natural reproduction. Indeed it was 'the only major West Indian sugar plantation colony which succeeded in eliminating an economic need for African slave imports before the slave trade was abolished in 1807'.[45] Some plantations were successfully rearing so many slaves that they were able not only to ensure their own continued supply of slaves, but could also export slaves to other colonies. This established export market for slaves was probably the reason that Barbados continued to import Africans when it had no need to do so and at a time when Barbadian plantation owners had developed a preference for creole slaves, who were accustomed to the established plantation system. The African slaves could be kept in Barbados for some time to recover from the journey across the Atlantic and to acclimatise before being sold on to another colony. As they had no concerns about obtaining sufficient labour for themselves by this time, most Barbadian slave owners were unperturbed when the Abolition Act was passed.[46]

After Abolition the main objectives were to improve the conditions of the slaves and to free them as soon as possible. The planters were generally against any moves by the British Government to improve the conditions of the slaves, believing them to be much better than the Government did. It was decided by Parliament in

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[45] Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 75.
[46] Craton, *Testing the Chains*, p. 257.

1824 to include Anglican religious teaching in the preparation of slaves for Emancipation and this no doubt laid the foundations for the predominantly Christian population found in Barbados today.[47]

As well as the anti-slavery movement in Britain, slave rebellions such as those in Barbados in 1816, Guyana in 1823 and Jamaica in 1831-2 contributed to slave emancipation.[48] In 1833 the Emancipation Bill was introduced in the British Parliament with the aim, on 1 August 1834, of emancipating all slaves younger than six years and freeing all other slaves on the condition that they became apprentices to their former owners so allowing them to gradually adjust to freedom, and their former owners time to reorganise their business interests whilst ensuring a plentiful supply of labour for the plantations. It was not however an ideal situation as the apprentices were not able to choose who they worked for and the planters complained of financial loss. As a result, the apprenticeship system was terminated earlier than originally anticipated, and all former slaves officially became completely free in 1838.

This Bill applied to all British West Indian colonies, not just Barbados, and the slave owners demanded compensation from the British Government considering that as Britain had benefited from the slave trade, it should therefore contribute to this humanitarian freeing of slaves. Parliament voted £20 million in compensation, of which Barbados received £1.7 million.

Under the apprenticeship system, in real terms, Barbados still had far more apprentices than other colonies. Unfortunately the children under six years of age

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[47] Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 88.
[48] Gilmore, *Faces of the Caribbean*, p. 108.

who had been freed often suffered because their parents were reluctant to let them work on the plantations, believing this to be another form of slavery, and the plantation owners were only responsible for their workers. This led to an increase in child mortality and abandonment as parents could not always properly feed or care for the children unaided.[49]

## After Emancipation

Emancipation was a major achievement for the black population of Barbados, and indeed of the other British West Indian colonies. It was not however the end of their struggles nor the achievement of equal opportunities with the white population. Neither was it the downfall of the plantocracy. Planters were reluctant to implement policies that the British Government sought to put in place, such as provision of education and health care. The planters were still a very powerful force who dominated the running of the island, and controlled the majority of the land, which prevented new settlements being made away from the plantations. The sugar industry was of paramount importance to the planters and the economy of the country and it was reliant upon sufficient, organised labour. Thus Acts such as the 1838 'Master and Servant Act', which not only embraced employment issues, but also public order matters, were drawn up to ensure law and order was maintained.[50]

Poverty and illness were rife among the ex-slaves, particularly the elderly. Government action to provide housing and work opportunities was necessary though painfully slow in implementation. A tenantry system was established whereby homes were provided on plantations for workers without their own

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[49] Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 97.
[50] Ibid., p. 109.

homes, but this created a situation not too dissimilar to that found during slavery as tenants were forced to follow the rules of the plantation owner. The workers then had a choice of working under less than ideal conditions, or risking living outside the plantation in one of the towns and possibly starving, or moving off the island. Some undoubtedly turned to crime as reported in the *Barbadian* in 1843:

> the frequency of burglaries, and robbing stores of property of late, is rather an alarming symptom of the increase of depravity among the worthy "gentlemen" of the late emancipated class.[51]

Barbadians were considered to be good workers, who were well used to agriculture and therefore attractive to planters elsewhere in the region. Other colonies such as Jamaica were attractive to the workers as they often offered higher wages and, due to the larger sizes of many of the colonies, more land was available for sale if the workers chose to stay. Many however only sought better financial reward for their work and travelled around following the work as the crops were ready for harvesting, returning to Barbados and their families when the crop was ready there. Some were able to buy land there, but very little was available, most belonging to the large plantations. Occasionally a planter would provide in his will for his workers to be able to buy land, but this did not shift the land-owning emphasis significantly.[52] The white planters were still the most powerful body of people on the island.

After Emancipation the free coloured people were also faced with changes in society. They had previously been discriminated against in most walks of life, but still aspired to the privileges of white society whilst showing little empathy with the slaves. However after Emancipation they sided with the black community where

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[51] *Barbadian*, 29 July 1843, p. 2.
[52] See for example the case of Reynold Alleyne Elcock cited in Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 115.

they could, encouraging them to raise their standard of living by adopting the life style of the coloured people and in doing this a larger portion of society was formed against the plantocracy.

After Emancipation the sugar industry experienced various ups and downs. Steps were taken to modernise production methods and equipment leading to a growth in the number of steam factories, which were capable of greater production than the windmills traditionally used. Sugar production was however receiving competition from elsewhere, including Cuba and Brazil where slavery had not been abolished and production costs were therefore lower. Sugar prices fell dramatically in the mid-nineteenth century and did not vary much for several decades. Things did not improve as Europe produced more of its own sugar from domestically grown beet, and Barbadian sugar exports and prices declined further towards the end of the nineteenth century.

**Migration**

Due to the small size of some of the Caribbean territories, there are obvious limitations and these have contributed to much inter-territory migration. Especially after slave Emancipation there were more opportunities for the African-descended populations of the region to move in and around the Caribbean in search of work, and this was particularly important for small countries such as Barbados where the choice was otherwise either to carry on working on the plantations or risk starving. Thus those who were willing and able could and did move elsewhere, possibly temporarily, in search of employment.

This migration affected all aspects of Caribbean life and, as I will discuss in Chapter 2, pp. 169-79, the results have been the similar traditions found in different territories. Undoubtedly this migration partially explains why so many countries in and around the Caribbean have a music similar to tuk. It could be said that this type of music only appears in countries that were European colonised and had a military base, and this would be a reasonable generalisation. However the extent of military presence and occupation varied considerably and was obviously heavier and longer in the most precious colonies such as Barbados, so the military influence may not be as strong as other factors. It must be borne in mind however that by the time Europe was colonising the Caribbean and Americas, fife and drum music was widespread in army life, as will be discussed in Chapter 2, pp. 126-7

Migration was a strong factor in carrying this music (and numerous other customs and traditions) around the region. Looking at migration from Barbados will illustrate this point. During the time of slavery, settlement of other territories such as Jamaica, British Guiana (now Guyana), Trinidad, Carolina and the Windward Islands (the southern part of the Lesser Antilles, south of Montserrat) was effected using slaves and freemen from Barbados. In Jamaica, Patterson says that 'until about 1670 the majority of the settlers "were old West Indians" from Barbados and other eastern Caribbean islands'.[53] As well as transplanting Barbadian customs, such as music elsewhere, this migration set up a network between these places between which trade took place and opened up opportunities after Emancipation for freed slaves to go and work in other colonies. By 1870 as many as 16,000 had done so, although some were purely seasonal migrants travelling abroad for work

[53] Orlando Patterson, *The Sociology of Slavery: An Analysis of the Origins, Development and Structure of Negro Slave Society in Jamaica* (London: Associated University Presses, 1967), p. 17.

on plantations and returning to Barbados when this was done.[54] In the twentieth century migration continued as the sugar industry declined and opportunities abroad increased (see below, p. 64). There has also been migration into Barbados from elsewhere in the Caribbean and from North America.[55]

Migration could also have been responsible for further creolization as people from different territories came together. Just as when Africans from different areas came together on the plantations and had to establish a mutually understood and acceptable language and way of life, so migrants from different places would have needed to have done the same. As they had drawn on similar African traits as slaves, the migrants would have drawn on their creole traditions, and, assuming enough time elapsed, a further creole tradition would have formed. If the migrants came from territories with similar histories, then the traditions would have more in common, but migrants from territories with different colonising countries would have had more variation in their existing traditions, thus creolization would have been a more complex process.

## PART 2

## TWENTIETH-CENTURY DEVELOPMENT

The dawn of the twentieth century saw the start of a century of vast change. In the first decade the foundations of the tourist industry were laid with increasing numbers of the wealthy of North America and Britain travelling to warmer climes for the winter months. Many visitors spent considerable time in the island, bringing

[54] Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 113.
[55] See for example Larry D. Gragg, 'Puritans in Paradise: The New England Migration to Barbados, 1640-1660' in *Journal of Caribbean History*, 21 (1988), 154-67.

in a valuable source of income, renting houses or staying in the hotels that soon developed to meet the demand.

Barbadians were aware that if they were to enjoy a stable economy, it was foolhardy to rely on the sugar monoculture. The trend that started following Emancipation to emigrate to other West Indian colonies in search of work continued, particularly with the shrinking demand for labour in the sugar industry. Many men sought work abroad – the building of the Panama Canal in 1904-1914 lured up to 45,000 Barbadians alone, many of whom settled in Panama permanently.[56] Most of those that returned did so with money to invest, some buying land from plantation owners who were by this time starting to struggle with sugar selling at less than its production costs. This was the turning point in the established land-owning pattern and helped to create new settlements where the inhabitants were free of the ties of the plantation system and were able to develop their own livelihoods as they chose. Others started their own businesses or set about learning a trade or profession. This increased wealth among the black population led to the revival, growth and development of friendly societies, some of which had been in existence since before Emancipation.[57] These societies acted as places for savings, and in return for a regular contribution, sickness and death benefit, and an annual bonus were payable.[58] Friendly societies also offered help to its members in various ways such as paying school fees. One of these, the Landship, was a significant factor in working class society and still functions today, albeit on a much reduced scale. The development and activities of the Landship will be discussed fully in Chapter 3.

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[56] Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 143.
[57] Fraser et al., *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage*, p. 75. In 1927 there were 225 registered societies with 41,045 members. For a full description of friendly society activities see A. F. Wells and D. Wells, *Friendly Societies in the West Indies: Report on a Survey* (London: H.M.S.O., 1953).
[58] Beckles, ibid., pp. 142-5 and 151-2.

An important development in black communities during the 1920s was the arrival of the revivalist churches, started by Pentecostal and Baptist missionaries from the United States. This move to revivalism was another way of breaking away from white control – in this case the Anglican Church.

Also during the 1920s the plantations were changing from family-owned and run businesses to large, corporately owned enterprises. The processing of the sugar was increasingly carried out in large factories rather than on individual plantations. For a while cotton was successfully re-introduced until the effects of the First World War meant that sugar prices rose dramatically and the planters returned to sugar. After the war however sugar demand dropped off as agriculture in Europe returned to normality.

The 1920s also saw the development of a political movement seeking improved status for the black community. This was influenced by Marcus Garvey's black power movement, the Universal Negro Improvement Association. Barbados was a British colony and the white elite remained in charge though becoming increasingly challenged in their actions and stance. Over the next three decades considerable changes took place in the country that put the black majority firmly in the driving seat of the government and moves were made during the 1960s to gain independence from Britain. Improvements in education continued, recognised as the foundation stone for future development and the improved status of the country and its people.

The tourist industry rapidly developed with the introduction of jet aircraft in the 1960s, which significantly reduced time and cost of travel, making Barbados a

more viable destination for holidays, not just extended stays, and therefore attractive to a wider market.[59] The resulting surge in hotel building created a knock-on effect in affiliated industries. Despite this, sugar was still the major contributor to the economy. By the 1980s tourism was a key factor in the economy, generating more income than sugar. Tourism is also labour-intensive, thus providing many jobs for locals, whether directly in terms of maids and waiting staff in hotels, or indirectly through the increased demand for foodstuffs that must be sourced by local suppliers.

## Education in Barbados

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries many of the plantocracy sent their children to England to be educated. The few schools that existed in Barbados were those set up by churches, primarily for religious instruction. Some schools offering a wider education were established by the early nineteenth century but excluded all blacks. Education of slaves only really began in response to Parliament's decision to give them religious instruction in preparation for Emancipation. It took until 1878, forty years after Emancipation, for an Education Act to be passed that provided for compulsory elementary education for all children.[60]

In 1930 Clyde Gollop recalls starting work as a pupil teacher at the age of fifteen. He remembers once teaching a class of eighty-five children. Apparently at that time the local priest was in charge of the school on behalf of the Anglican Church and to get a teaching job 'you had to be on good terms with the priest'. He believes the fact that he also worked as a Sunday school teacher helped him get a

[59] Tourist arrivals rose from 35,535 in 1960 to 134,303 in 1969. By 1989 arrivals were 461,259. Figures courtesy of Barbados Tourism Authority.
[60] Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 106.

job. The school boards were usually made up of the priest, other church officials and some plantation owners.[61] Having the right connections or being seen to be doing the right thing was obviously important.

The education system reinforced all the divisions in society and kept each class firmly in their place. The child from a working class background would not be likely to be able to compete for the same jobs as the child from an upper class one, thus the chances for improvement and climbing the social ladder were diminished. Before Independence the top jobs in all walks of life were held predominantly by the white upper classes reinforcing and perpetuating the values of the British class system.

During the twentieth century, class and colour divides continued to shape the education system and it was not until 1962 that secondary education was made compulsory, prior to then it was the preserve of those who passed the requisite entrance exam. Elitism continues in Barbadian education today with schools such as Harrison College, Queen's College and Combermere considered academically superior to others. Significant changes have however taken place in education since Independence. Schools owned by churches have been gradually replaced with Government owned ones. Changes in the curriculum have been effected, and continue to be made, to keep up with developments elsewhere and ensure young Barbadians receive a well-balanced education.

The education system is broadly modelled on the British system, with pupils at age sixteen taking Caribbean Examinations Council exams (CXC), similar to the British

[61] Interview, 2 May 2000.

General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE); followed by a two-year course leading to Advanced ('A') levels where appropriate. There are higher education institutions in Barbados that pupils can move on to after age eighteen, including a campus of the University of the West Indies. Other students go to university elsewhere in the Caribbean, in the U.S.A., Canada or Britain.

## Language

Barbados is an English-speaking country. That is, the official language of communication in speech and in writing is English. However, what many Barbadians speak on a day-to-day basis is creole English, usually referred to as Bajan, a mixture of English and African languages. Peter Roberts says that creole is:

> normally used to refer to a dialect or language which is the result of contact between the language of a colonising people and the languages of a colonised people. The language itself is characterised by many reductions in the word forms of the language of the colonisers with many sound, phrase and sentence patterns which are typical of the original languages of the colonised people.[62]

Other Caribbean countries have creole languages but some were colonised by the French, Dutch or Spanish and some even changed hands more than once, thus leading to a more varied linguistic input. Barbados had continuous British rule and it is possible its language has therefore retained more of the English language than other creole languages have.

It is sometimes said that Bajan is spoken with a West Country or Bristol accent and this may be attributable to the fact that the early fieldworkers, from whom African slaves would have picked up English words, were often from that part of

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[62] Peter A. Roberts, *West Indians and their Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 13.

England.[63] There are some negative connotations attached to Bajan. Some believe it is low class and that therefore its speakers are. It tends to be the older working class members of the population who speak only Bajan. Many people are fluent in both Bajan and English and switch between them without a thought. This is particularly the case of people who work in the hospitality industry where they have significant contact with tourists – they will speak to the tourists in English, but when conversing with another Barbadian will revert to Bajan.

Children growing up today however are surrounded by English rather than Bajan – they turn on the radio or television and hear English, whether it is American, British or Caribbean. Also, the education system will have promoted a standardised English as noted by Roberts:

> Standard English has been regarded by all West Indian governments from the beginning of the 20th century and before as the optimum form of language for conducting business and for instruction in public schools [...]. For at least the first half of the century the non-standard English vernaculars [...] were believed to be a real impediment to the acquisition of standard English and so teachers were charged with the task of discouraging or eradicating them.[64]

However during the last quarter of the twentieth century the Caribbean Examinations Council's English syllabus has encouraged the use of creole languages whilst ensuring standard English is maintained as a formal means of teaching and communication, therefore the use of Bajan will not become redundant.

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[63] Bristol was one of the main ports at the time. Carl and Roberta Bridenbaugh, *No Peace beyond the Line: The English in the Caribbean 1624-1690* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 352. See also Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 71.
[64] *West Indians and their Language*, p. 172.

## Tourism and Sugar

Today much of the island's economy relies on tourism and the associated industries that contribute to the success of Barbados as a tourist destination. The west coast boasts a number of five star hotels and golf courses frequented by wealthy visitors. It is significant that Barbados is the only Caribbean destination to enjoy a year-round scheduled Concorde service from London. Much employment is found in the service industries, thus reflecting the shift away from agriculture with the modernisation of farming and production methods requiring less man power, and the decrease in the number of plantations as land was sold for development – the returns from developing land are significantly greater than the returns from agriculture.

Parallel to the post-Independence rise in tourism is the decline in sugar production. It did not remain competitive in the world market, particularly with increased competition from European sugar beet producers. The industry also struggled in the face of adverse perceptions about working in the sugar industry and, with its social stigma stemming from the days of slavery, it has been unable to recruit the right people to develop the industry. Cutting cane is exhausting work, and whilst it can be harvested mechanically, most Barbadian cane is still harvested by hand, which actually reaps more cane than the wasteful machine method. Gmelch and Gmelch found that young Barbadians 'view agricultural work as degrading' and that many 'would rather be unemployed than work in the fields'.[65] The importance placed on education, particularly in the second half of the twentieth century, has also contributed to the decline in the sugar industry as children are encouraged to study and pursue careers outside of agriculture.

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[65] George Gmelch and Sharon Bohn Gmelch, *The Parish behind God's Back: The Changing Culture of Rural Barbados* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), pp. 47-8.

Barbados has now diversified and alongside tourism its economy includes financial services, manufacturing and construction as well as sugar production.

## Religion in Barbados

Barbados is a predominantly Christian country today with over one hundred different sects in existence. There are also small numbers of members of other faiths such as Judaism and Hinduism. Gmelch and Gmelch state that 58 percent of Barbadians 'attend church regularly' with a third of the population claiming to belong to the Anglican Church.[66] They say Anglicanism is perceived to be respectable but that it still exudes elite status, which is one of the reasons for the popularity of the revivalist churches. As more of the black population sought to move away from organisations traditionally associated with white control, the revivalist churches gained popularity. This began in the 1920s, parallel with the revival of friendly societies and the Landship. Services in these churches are lively and energetic, with the congregation taking part in all aspects of the service, rather than being told what to do by the priest. This form of worship is not approved of by all. Some would question its morality in allowing congregations to dance, sing and call out whenever they feel compelled to do so. There are others however who see the attraction of such forms of worship and seek to adapt the Anglican ways to incorporate more modern, more Caribbean ways and therefore maintain relevance in modern Barbadian society. One Anglican priest, the Reverend William Dixon, formerly of St Christopher's Church in Silver Sands, now Dean of St Michael's Cathedral in Bridgetown, has, since the 1980s been endeavouring to promote Caribbean music, dance and drama as part of Anglican

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[66] *The Parish behind God's Back*, p. 147.

worship. He said 'we must move from being the Church of England in the Caribbean and be the Anglican Church in the Caribbean'.[67]

## AFTER INDEPENDENCE

Barbados finally gained Independence from Britain on 30 November 1966 and remains a part of the Commonwealth. There are moves towards Barbados becoming a republic with a draft Constitution Bill being presented to the Barbados Parliament in January 2002.[68]

After three hundred years of British colonialism, the teachings of the Anglican Church, of European history and British ways and customs were firmly in place in Barbados. The history and customs of the black population were however suppressed, ignored, derided, or had simply been lost. Even before Independence however, some Barbadians were questioning the European cultural heritage that had been imposed on them as a result of colonialism, and were seeking to recover and explore their African roots. The working classes had, to some extent, been preserving their African heritage continuously, but those seeking higher status had, up to this time, rejected what was perceived to be inferior to European culture. Various moves have been made to raise the profile of the country's African heritage and today continuing efforts to increase awareness of African facets of culture are having varying effects. Some Barbadians choose to express their African heritage by changing their names to African ones or by wearing African-style clothes. This expression of the country's African heritage is important for as Kathleen Drayton says, 'the national heritage must include the creations and products, the culture of the people who settle a country, and in the

[67] Hartley Henry, 'Church Change – Anglican priest says: Go Caribbean', *Daily Nation*, 24 August 1987, p. 1.
[68] Albert Brandford, 'Step No. 1', *Daily Nation* Online, 21 January 2002.

case of Barbados these were English and African'.[69] However, it is possible that as a direct result of the imposition of colonial ideals, some Barbadians today reject the European heritage of Barbados, such as religion, language and style of dress. Whilst this is understandable, there are potential dangers in doing so. Drayton suggests that to deny that Barbadian heritage includes both European and African cultures 'and to refuse to work towards their integration will be to foster the bitterness and anger of racism, and to do nothing to heal the severe racial fragmentation of this society'.[70]

After Independence the black population would have been able to assert their views more strongly and for those with an interest in discovering what was the African heritage of the country, this was an ideal opportunity. However, it was not something that many people consciously thought of, for most they simply carried on as they had been doing, which is not at all surprising, after all three hundred years of colonialism is a long time and cannot be overlooked.

Barbados' long British connection is used in the tourist industry, presumably as an attraction to British people to make them feel at home and perhaps to appeal to those Americans who have a fascination for all things English. It is not uncommon in tourist literature or at shows put on specifically for tourists, for Barbados to be referred to as 'Little England', a name it was known by in colonial times. I have also seen and heard references to cricket, afternoon tea and the statue of Nelson in Trafalgar Square in Bridgetown as parallels to British culture. One example in tourist literature reads 'You'll find a British flavour in our customary offerings – with afternoon tea served daily at select hotels, an ardent passion for cricket and polo,

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[69] 'Art, Culture and National Heritage', in *Barbados: Thirty Years of Independence*, ed. by Trevor Carmichael (Kingston: Ian Randle, 1996), p. 198.
[70] Ibid., p. 234.

English as the national language, and even an aptly-named Scotland District.' [71] Another claims that 'despite Barbados' independence in 1966, a very British atmosphere prevails'.[72] This type of marketing is targeted at the wealthy British tourist for whom afternoon tea, cricket and polo are part of their culture, and the intimation of a British atmosphere is perhaps aimed at the sort of tourist who wants all the comforts of a holiday at home but with the climate of the Caribbean. Barbados has been able to boast that Nelson stood in Trafalgar Square in Bridgetown before London had Nelson in its Trafalgar Square, but it has been planned for several years to replace him with a national hero in the renamed 'National Heroes Square', so some of the marketing will have to change. It will be interesting to see if the tourist industry still wishes to play on the British connection if Barbados does become a republic.

Even after thirty years of Independence some Barbadians find it difficult to put their finger on what really is indigenous to Barbados. Gmelch and Gmelch, who have undertaken much field work in the parish of St Lucy (the northernmost, which today remains a rural area) say there is little regarded 'as uniquely Bajan except foods - flying fish and coucou - and folk traditions such as Land Ship and Crop Over. It is fairly common to hear Barbadians claim, "Barbados has no culture"'.[73] Maybe this is why culture from outside Barbados is more readily adopted than home-grown culture. The perception is that Barbados has nothing to offer them and, in these days of satellite television, the Internet, and freedom of choice from vast markets, there is plenty to choose from.

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[71] *Just Beyond Your Imagination* (Barbados Tourism Authority), pp. 2-3.
[72] *Barbados Travel Planner* (Barbados Tourism Authority), p. 11.
[73] *The Parish behind God's back*, p. 190.

## CULTURE

There was no indigenous Barbadian population at the time of colonisation, as discussed earlier, pp. 37-8, so what existed as Barbadian culture at the time of Independence in 1966 was a creole culture. This had developed during the colonial years and exhibited a marked preference for European tastes and a suppression of others. Many Barbadians were brought up believing that the European culture that had been imposed on Barbados was superior to African culture. Part of the assimilation of things European was no doubt fuelled by an aspiration for a better quality of life. Beckles suggests that this happened during slavery, with slaves openly assimilating European elements of culture such as dressing in the style of their masters, 'so as to achieve social and material betterment'.[74] However, immediately after Independence, Barbadian people, finally free of colonial imposition, were able to start establishing a national identity that was more representative of the culture of the majority black population.

The enslaved Africans came from a variety of peoples who had some fundamentally similar elements in their cultures such as language, and musical practices. Because of the manner in which the slaves were split up these similarities became dominant and integrated with the dominant elements of the culture of the colonisers and other groups such as the poor whites.

With increased opportunities after Emancipation the black population had been able to more firmly establish their own culture such as tuk music and the Landship. It was however only in the twentieth century, with moves being made to gain

[74] Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 52.

Independence, that awareness developed that there was a 'lost' heritage of Africa, which had been suppressed or eradicated during the colonial years.

Marvin Harris says 'that a culture is the socially learned ways of living found in human societies and that it embraces all aspects of social life, including both thought and behaviour'.[75] Individuals' values are important in shaping culture and influencing others, thus a created culture is very much going to reflect the dominant section of the population at the time it is created, hence the dominance of European things in Barbadian culture. However, culture is not static and responds to changes in its environment, moving with the times, and Barbadian culture will reflect what is most important to its population at any given time, as will any culture in the world.

Culture encompasses everyday traditions, attitudes, religion, language, food and music. Colonialism imposed British culture on all Barbadians who were British subjects. The education system was tailored to teach the history and culture of Britain, and to impose and reinforce the teachings of the Anglican Church, which long-dominated the island's religious life and even today retains the allegiance of a substantial proportion of the population. Other British impositions on Barbados included the Westminster style parliamentary system, driving on the left-hand side of the road, the English custom of tea drinking, and the familiar names of English towns such as Hastings, Worthing and Brighton.

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[75] *Theories of Culture in Postmodern Times* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1999), p. 19.

## The Rum Shop

From the 1930s a major turn around in leisure activities started in Barbados with the introduction of radio. Up to that time villages usually had two focal points for recreation, the rum shop and the church.

> Dual membership was not possible – one was the house of God, the other was probably considered to be the house of the devil. It wasn't just attitude that divided. Sex made a difference. The church was identified with more devout women and children. The latter [the rum shop] with irreligious men folk. The front section of the rumshop was often the only outlet in the village for groceries and thus women and children were allowed here. The backroom bar however was out of bounds and any woman seen there was considered to be of ill repute.[76]

Working class men gathered at the rum shop to drink, play games and talk. Until the introduction of radio, musical entertainment was often provided by tuk bands who would receive rum in return for their performance. For most of the twentieth century, as Stoute and Ifill say above, there was a stigma attached to any women seen in the back room. This, and the association of the rum shop with the tuk bands (whose playing may have deteriorated if they were paid with too much rum), contributed to the belief that rum shops (or at least the back room) were not respectable establishments. However, one lady I spoke to who ran a rum shop in the 1950s told me that her rum shop 'was a decent place' and that the tuk band never went there.[77] Her comment regarding the tuk band suggests that it was in fact the tuk band that was looked down on by some rather than the rum shop. A woman running a rum shop was a businesswoman and therefore no negative connotations arose, but the concept of a rum shop being considered 'decent' is probably confined to the working classes.

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[76] Janet Stoute and Kenneth Ifill, 'The Rural Rum Shop: A Comparative Case Study' in *Everyday Life in Barbados*, ed. by Graham S. Dann (Leiden: Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology, 1976), pp. 145-67 (p. 146).

[77] Telephone conversation with Violet Laurie, aged 85, 20 February 2001.

Since the last decade of the twentieth century it has become more acceptable for women to go into rum shops, albeit only in the company of men, but there is still some social disapproval of this. On the whole, Barbadians of the upper and middle classes appear slightly shocked or amused if they find out a woman has been in a rum shop. Men still dominate rum shops and whilst they still drink, talk and play games (usually dominoes, or more rarely Warri), they are now entertained by jukeboxes, radio or television rather than live music.

**The Royal Barbados Police Force Band**

The Police Band has been an established part of Barbadian culture since 1889, fulfilling the role of a military-type band, playing at official public engagements as well as providing entertainment. During the twentieth century the Police Band is often reported as having performed on Hastings Rocks, in Queen's Park on Christmas morning, at the Annual Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition, and events further afield such as the Edinburgh Military Tattoo.[78] However, it was not universally felt that the Band, and other aspects of Barbadian culture were appreciated by many. A letter in the *Advocate* in 1966 condemns 'the general public for its lack of interest in good music, especially when created by local performers'. The writer draws on a reference to Barbados as 'a cultural desert' and suggests this is down to:

> the failure of our social and educational background, either to create in the Barbadian a strong sense of appreciation for Western European cultural forms, as might have been expected, or alternatively, and preferably, to stimulate us to express ourselves in forms moulded specifically by our own environment, interests and needs.[79]

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[78] For example: *Barbados Standard*, 20 December 1913, p. 5; *Barbados Advocate*, 6 January 1928, p. 3; *Barbados Daily News*, 10 August 1960, p. 2.
[79] 'Why don't we appreciate our band?', signed H. S. F., *Advocate*, 31 August 1966, p. 4.

## Television and Radio

When television started in Barbados in 1964 everything was imported – 'the technology, the industrial arrangements, the operating principles, the management concepts, the programming strategies and the programmes'.[80] Undoubtedly it was easier and probably cheaper to do this, but at a time when Barbados was working towards Independence, it would have been beneficial to integrate those factors with Barbadian ways, to avoid the imposition of even more outside factors. It would also have been crucial to start developing a home-grown industry immediately so that dependence on the outside could have been diminished fairly quickly.

Television and radio programming in 1966 illustrates the American and British culture that was broadcast into Barbadian homes. On Christmas Day 1966, the six hours of television included *The Flintstones*, H.M. The Queen's Christmas Message, and *The Nutcracker Ballet*. Other television programmes featured over the Christmas period included *Doctor Who, The Dick Van Dyke Show, The Avengers, 77 Sunset Strip, Thunderbirds, Dr Kildare* and *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*.[81] Radio programmes were more local and Christmas oriented and included a Police Band concert; services from St Michael's Cathedral in Bridgetown and other local churches, the Barbadian Prime Minister's Christmas Message; a service from Westminster Abbey, and various performances of Christmas carols and music.

During the 1970s some efforts were made to regenerate Barbadian art forms such as tuk and to introduce African dance. One effort was made by Elombe Mottley

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[80] Gladstone Yearwood and Mike Richards, *Broadcasting in Barbados: The Cultural Impact of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation* (Bridgetown: Lighthouse Communications, 1989), p. 4.
[81] *Advocate*, 25 December 1966, p. 18.

who set up Yoruba Yard, an organisation that held workshops, put on shows and was a social centre for Barbadian artistes of poetry, drama, music and dance to meet, train and perform. Unfortunately it did not survive for many years but it did make a significant contribution to the development of African dance and drumming in Barbados through the employment of African teachers.[82] Other groups developed to stage Caribbean and Barbadian theatre, and the Pinelands Creative Workshop today produces shows incorporating drama, dance and music drawing on Barbados' African heritage.[83]

## The North American Cultural Invasion

The Barbados Government recognises a need to keep North American culture at bay and preserve Barbados' heritage.[84] The invasion of outside, notably North American culture has been blamed for contributing to the ills of society, especially a growing lack of morality.

There has been an increasing influx of American culture since the 1920s - American tourists; American food - younger Barbadians often prefer to eat Kentucky Fried Chicken rather than cou-cou and flying fish (which is always described as the national dish of Barbados); American music on the radio and American programmes on the television thrusting American culture directly into the Barbadian home (if you switch on the television in Barbados the chances of seeing a locally made programme are remote). As Barbados moved from the restrictions of colonialism in the late 1960s, it rapidly became exposed to more North American culture, particularly with the growth of the tourism industry and

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[82] Drayton, 'Art, Culture and National Heritage', (pp. 217-8).
[83] Programme from *Dance, Drums & Deities – Ballet de Nature*, presented by Pinelands Creative Workshop, Parkinson Memorial School, 23 April 2000.
[84] Comments made during an interview with Ellsworth Young, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 18 February 1999.

introduction of television. Gmelch and Gmelch say that this was bad timing 'just when Barbadians were free to examine the roles their African and British heritages had played in creating their Creole culture and identity and to forge stronger regional ties, they were overwhelmed by North America'.[85] It was noted in 1966 that the demise of certain traditions in Barbados could be due to 'the advent of television, the hi-fi set, a superficial sophistication and the rise in the cost of living'.[86]

For many Barbadians, especially those born in the 1960s onwards, their cultural life has been dominated by North American culture and things American, and as they have nothing else to compare it to, and no strong values to challenge what they see and do, there is little reason, if any, for them to reject this. Indeed the image often created of American culture and things American is that everything is bigger and better, and most human beings generally aspire to bigger and better things in their lives, so the appeal is understandable.

## SCHOLARLY PERSPECTIVES ON NATIONAL IDENTITY

Lewis suggests that 'all newly independent societies seek a positive philosophy to replace the habits of colonial dependency'.[87] Immediately after Independence in Barbados must have been an overwhelming time for those consciously seeking a new national identity, and deciding on what this should be based. There were no clearly defining non-European cultural aspects such as dress and hairstyle, and thus Barbadians found it easy to adopt whatever they chose, often drawing on a range of influences. For example, a journalist writes of an experience in Barbados

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[85] *The Parish behind God's Back*, p. 190.
[86] 'Bajan folklore', *Barbados Advocate*, 30 November 1966, p. 75.
[87] Gordon K. Lewis, *The Growth of the Modern West Indies* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1968), p. 392.

in which he describes being driven around by 'a Rastafarian taxi-driver wearing a large Crucifix in each ear'.[88] The culture that existed was European-biased, well out of proportion to the size of the population of African descent. Such a situation was not unique to Barbados and in 1984 Gilmore said that 'having rejected the long-held assumption that all good things come from European capitals, the peoples of the Caribbean are now remaking themselves in their own image, without, as yet, being entirely decided what that image should be'.[89]

Kubik suggests that 'identities are not discussed in societies in which a living identity is in operation' and that identities only 'begin to be discussed precisely when for some reason – in at least a segment of the society – there is uncertainty about identities'.[90] That was certainly, and I believe, is still to some extent, the case in Barbados. This was a natural side effect of gaining Independence; a sudden conscious awareness of a need for a new identity as the country moved from being a colony to independent status. Kubik continues, 'identity can become even more of a problem for the authority trying to identify than for the individuals to be identified'.[91] So whilst the Barbadian Government may have been busy trying to create an identity for the country, the average Barbadian probably carried on life as they had done before Independence was gained.

Music often contributes to identity. Simon Frith suggests that 'music constructs our sense of identity through the direct experiences it offers of the body, time and

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[88] K. Spence, 'Little Britain in the Caribbean' in *Country Life* (1982), pp. 82-3, (p. 82).
[89] *Episcopacy, Emancipation and Evangelization: Aspects of the History of the Church of England in the British West Indies*, p. 1.
[90] Gerhard Kubik, 'Ethnicity, Cultural Identity and the Psychology of Culture Contact' in *Music and Black Identity: The Caribbean and South America*, ed. by Gerard H. Béhague (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 17-46 (p. 27).
[91] 'Ethnicity, Cultural Identity and the Psychology of Culture Contact', (p. 27).

sociability'.[92] Thus music creates a sense of belonging, whether to a particular place or group of people. There are a number of examples of Caribbean musics that contribute to the identity of their own country as well as a Caribbean identity. The obvious example of a music that identifies its country is reggae from Jamaica. Reggae developed in the downtown areas of the capital, Kingston, the music of the working classes, voicing their feelings. Many songs, particularly those with strong Rastafarian influences are concerned with issues of peace, love and black identity. Others are messages of discontent and complaint about life's problems. Reggae has done what few musics have done – it has crossed cultural, social and religious divides and is synonymous with Jamaica. It is a strong influence in the international popular music scene as noted by Manuel who says reggae 'has exerted an international impact remarkable for such a small nation'.[93]

Steelband music is automatically identified with the Caribbean, even though bands are to be found all over the world. The steelband originated in Trinidad and whilst Trinidadians identify with steelband as their national music (as well as calypso), the steelband has been adopted all over the Caribbean and the wide-ranging repertoire performed by pannists contributes to its popular appeal.

Merengue is the national music of the Dominican Republic. It started off life as a folk dance of the working classes and was only adopted by the middle classes as part of a display of nationalism during the 1916-24 American occupation. From 1930-61 the country was in the grip of a dictatorship that actively promoted merengue, which established it as an important part of national culture, it

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[92] 'Music and Identity' in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. by Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay, (London: Sage Publications, 1996), pp. 108-27 (p. 124)
[93] Peter Manuel, *Popular Musics of the Non-Western World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 74

becoming what Manuel et al. describe as 'the single most significant unifying cultural entity in the nation'.[94] Merengue is what Duany describes as 'an essential part of Dominican identity, both in the Dominican Republic and abroad'.[95]

A recent, conscious effort to assert Caribbean identity through music has been the development of what is called *SäF* (*sic*) in Barbados. This has been promoted by Ice Records who claim it to be the Caribbean's equivalent to North American jazz, similar but different because of the different experiences of Caribbean and North American people, giving rise to a 'more rhythmic' music.[96] This re-labelling of Caribbean jazz seems to be part of an ideal to establish a Caribbean identity apart from North American identity.

Martin Stokes says that music has social meaning 'because it provides means by which people recognise identities and places, and the boundaries which separate them'. He gives as an example the boundaries created between Irish and British identities in Belfast where Protestant Orangemen parades with fife and drum bands demarcate the city centre as Protestant and British.[97] Music can create an identity recognisable not only to whom the music belongs, but also to others, and can therefore be an important part of a country's national identity.

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[94] Peter Manuel, Kenneth M. Bilby and Michael Largey, *Caribbean Currents: Caribbean Music from Rumba to Reggae* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), p. 103
[95] Jorge Duany, 'Ethnicity, Identity, and Music: An Anthropological Analysis of the Dominican Merengue' in *Music and Black Ethnicity: The Caribbean and South America*, ed. by Gerard H. Béhague (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishing, 1994), pp. 65-90 (p. 80)
[96] For more information visit www.icerecords.com/SAF.HTM
[97] 'Introduction' in *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place*, ed. by Martin Stokes (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1994), 1-27 (pp. 8-9)

## SUMMARY

Barbados has been shaped by colonialism and sugar. The mass importation of African slaves to work on the sugar plantations has permanently shaped the country and endowed a rich cultural heritage that has only really been explored since Independence was achieved. The other effects of British colonialism have had a long-standing influence on the country and its people, but that is now being downplayed in an effort to establish a culture rich in the African heritage of the majority population. The cultural and music scene in Barbados is changing rapidly because of tourism, Americanisation and commercialisation, and the creation and adoption of a Barbadian national identity that reflects the country's African heritage.

# Chapter 2

# HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF TUK

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the history and development of tuk, following its adaptation and recontextualisation into the twenty-first century. Part 1 explores the history of tuk, including musical activity during the Middle Passage, African music, slave music and British military music - all of which have had some influence on tuk. Part 2 examines the instruments, rhythms and repertoire of tuk before exploring different types of tuk including similar musics found elsewhere and comparing these with tuk. Part 3 looks at the contemporary tuk scene, examining who is playing tuk today and how it is perceived. Factors and influences that have recontextualised tuk are also examined.

# PART 1

# HISTORY

## THE ORIGINS OF TUK

The origin of the name of tuk was in an old Scottish word 'touk', meaning the beat or tap of a drum, also spelled at various times as tuck, tuick or tuk. According to the *Pocket Scots Dictionary* 'by touk of a drum' meant a proclamation made by a public crier with his drum during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. *A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* defines touk as 'a stroke or tap on a drum' the beating of a drum'.[1] A further, similar definition can be found in *Chambers Scots Dictionary*, which defines touk as meaning 'to beat a drum; used of a drum; to sound'.[2] An alternative explanation was suggested by Maurice B. Hutt who

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[1] *A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue from the Twelfth Century to the end of the Seventeenth*, ed. by Margaret G. Dareau, Lorna Pike and Harry D. Watson, 12 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), X, 627.

[2] *The Pocket Scots Dictionary*, ed. by Iseabail Macleod, Ruth Martin and Pauline Cairns (Edinburgh: W & R Chambers, 1988), p. 729.
*Chambers Scots Dictionary,* ed. by A. Warrack (Edinburgh: W & R Chambers, 1911; repr. 1971), p. 623.

raised the possibility that 'tuk' is derived from the Italian word 'tocco', to touch or stroke.[3] This is a term known to military musicians today, but whether the average soldier of the seventeenth century was familiar with the term is unclear. It may be coincidence that the large numbers of Scots sent to Barbados called the beat of a drum 'touk', and that military musicians did the same. Hutt also commented on the use of the term in Ireland, and considering the common ancestry and similarities in culture of the Scots and Irish, that is not surprising.

The other suggested origin of the name is that it is onomatopoeic. The band is often known as a bumbatuk band, the bum-ba signifying the sound of the bass (or bum) drum, and the tuk representing the sound of the kittle.[4] Another name sometimes used to describe the music is ruk-a-tuk, described by Best as 'an ideophonic sound-image of the music of the band and especially of the snare drum's rapid, and shortly resonating rolls'.[5]

Another strong possibility is that the bumba part of the name is African derived. Quintero-Rivera says that 'plantation music became so identified with drums, that in many different places of the Americas [...] it was called 'bomba' (or words with similar sounds) after an African word for drum'.[6] This seems to be a viable explanation and the fusion of the African word 'bomba' with the Scottish word 'touk' would simply be a further example of the creolization process.

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[3] 'Leh we fire one down for Xmas', *Sunday Advocate*, 24 December 1978. Article found in Tuk file at Barbados Museum Library, no page reference given.
[4] Curwen Best, *Barbadian Popular Music and the Politics of Caribbean Culture* rev. edn (Vermont: Schenkman Books, 1999), pp. 10-1. *Dictionary of Caribbean English* Usage, ed. by Richard Allsopp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 569.
[5] Curwen Best, 'Rhythm of Tuk: a Barbadian Style', *Journal of Caribbean History*, 29 (1995), 37-46 (p. 41).
[6] Angel G. Quintero-Rivera, 'The Camouflaged Drum: Melodization of Rhythms and Maroonage Ethnicity in Caribbean Peasant Music' in *Music and Black Ethnicity: The Caribbean and South America*, ed. by Gerard H. Béhague (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 47-63 (p. 48).

During slavery different instruments were used in musical ensembles that would explain the varying accounts of slave music by contemporary writers. After Emancipation various combinations of instruments seem to have been used, though notably the drum and the fiddle seem to have been most popular. Willock says the penny whistle replaced the fiddle just over a hundred years ago in the late nineteenth century and has speculated that this may have been due to the cost of replacement violin strings.[7] Perhaps it was when the penny whistle came in that singing with tuk started dying out (this will be discussed later pp. 159-67).

The earliest reference I have found to a tuk band with a fiddle is one made by J. Graham Cruickshank in an article published in 1911. He says that in an interview with an 'old Negro' who had 'seen slavery', that 'there was a fiddler who had jobs all over the island at Christmas time. Sometimes they had a touk dance'. This suggests that the fiddler was either a solo player or that he went around providing the melodic part of the 'touk dance', which is described as being 'fiddle, drum and thing'.[8] Unfortunately Cruickshank does not say when he carried out this interview. For someone to have 'seen slavery' and still be alive in 1911, they would have been at least ninety years old. It is possible however that the interview took place some time earlier. It is also a great pity that the 'old Negro' is not named as it may have been possible to trace his dates of birth and death, which could have helped substantiate the evidence. As it stands, it is the earliest direct reference to 'touk' and certainly the only direct reference to its connection with slavery that I have found.

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[7] Comment made during cultural show at Accra Beach Hotel, 27 April 2000.
[8] J. Graham Cruickshank, 'Negro English, With Reference Particularly to Barbados', *Timehri*, 3rd series, 1 (1911), 102-6 (p. 106).

The origins and early history of tuk music are not documented. However a widely accepted theory has developed. That theory is that tuk is a fusion of African and European musical elements from the days of slavery, with African music disguised as the music of the British military bands. There is, however, more to it than purely a convenient blending for, as Maultsby says:

> Slaves adapted to life in the Americas by retaining a perspective on the past. They survived an oppressive existence by creating new expressive forms out of African traditions, and they brought relevance to European-American customs by reshaping them to conform to African aesthetic ideals.[9]

Music was very important to the enslaved Africans. Hebdige suggests that:

> By preserving African traditions, by remembering African rhythms, the slaves could keep alive the memory of the freedom they had lost. They could keep a part of themselves free from European influence. At the same time they could adapt European forms of music and dance to suit their needs. [...] As far as the law was concerned, they didn't even own themselves. But they were free to take the masters' music. By adding African rhythms they could turn it into something which was exclusively their own.[10]

Thus a syncretic, creole music was born out of necessity, convenience and some shared elements. Creolization, according to Brathwaite, 'was a cultural process that took place in a creole society'.[11] Creolization occurs because it is 'a way of forming a "native" identity in a situation where there is no natal society'.[12] The process of syncretization blended musical elements from European and African cultures to provide the slaves with the creole music they refined and developed to become uniquely theirs.

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[9] Portia K. Maultsby, 'Africanisms in African-American Music' *in Africanisms in American Culture*, ed. by Joseph E. Holloway (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 185-210 (p. 185).
[10] Dick Hebdige, *Cut 'N' Mix: Culture, Identity and Caribbean Music* (London: Methuen, 1987; repr. London: Routledge, 2000), p. 26.
[11] Edward Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica 1770-1820* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 306.
[12] Richard C. Rath, 'Drums and Power: Ways of Creolizing Music in Coastal South Carolina and Georgia 1730-90' in *Creolization in the Americas*, ed. by David Buisseret and Steven G. Reinhardt (College Station: A & M University Press, 2000), pp. 99-130 (p. 99).

## Musical activity during the Middle Passage

Journals of captains of slave ships report that slaves were taken onto the decks of the ships for exercise, very often dance, and that music was often provided for this purpose. Thomas Philips, the captain of the *Hannibal* in 1693 wrote:

> We often at sea, in the evenings, would let the slaves come up into the sun to air themselves, and make them jump and dance for an hour or two to our bag-pipes, harp and fiddle, by which exercise to preserve them in health; but notwithstanding all our endeavour, 'twas my hard fortune to have great sickness and mortality among them.[13]

Alexander Falconbridge, a ship's doctor, in 1788 recorded that:

> Exercise being considered necessary for the preservation of their health they are sometimes obliged to dance when the weather will permit their coming on deck. If they go about it reluctantly or do not move with agility, they are flogged; a person standing by them all the time with a cat-o'-nine-tails in his hand for that purpose. Their music, upon these occasions, consists of a drum, sometimes with only one head; and when that is worn out they make use of the bottom of one of the tubs before described. The poor wretches are frequently compelled to sing also; but when they do so, their songs are generally, as may naturally be expected, melancholy lamentations of their exile from their native country.[14]

As well as for exercise, the slaves were sometimes made to dance to entertain the captain and his guests, and as a source of amusement for the crew as noted by James Barbot, the part owner of the *Albion-Frigate* on a slaving voyage in 1699:

> Towards evening the blacks would divert themselves on the deck, as they thought fit some conversing together, others dancing, singing or sporting after their manner, which often made us pastime, especially the females, who, being apart from the males and on the quarter deck and many of them young sprightly maidens, full of jollity and good humour, afforded us abundance of recreation.[15]

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[13] *Slave Ships and Slaving,* ed. by George F. Dow (Salem: The Marine Research Society, 1927), p. 67.
[14] Ibid., p. 145.
[15] Ibid., p. 84.

In 1793 Bryan Edwards wrote that between meals the slaves were 'encouraged to divert themselves with music and dancing; for which purpose such rude and uncouth instruments as are used in Africa, are collected before their departure'.[16] So evidently some ships carried African instruments on the voyage, whereas others, such as the one documented by Philips, and cited above, clearly indicates that the slaves were exposed to the instruments, and therefore the music of the crew. This may have been an early start to the assimilation of European-style musical instruments and music for some of the slaves. It is unclear how common the practice of taking African instruments on slave ships was and whether any survived the trans-Atlantic journey to be kept by the slaves is doubtful.

## SLAVE MUSIC

### Instruments

In Barbados initially the slaves would have used instruments fashioned after those they were accustomed to in their African homeland. Oldmixon observed their use of instruments similar to kettledrums and other instruments such as 'a *Bangil*, not much unlike our Lute in any thing, but the Musick; the *Rookaw*, which is two Sticks jagg'd; and a *Jinkgoving*, which is a way of clapping their Hands on the Mouth of two Jars'. Hughes noted their use of 'a Banjau, a Gambay, and a Drum, which they likewise call a Pump'. Pinckard noted 'a species of drum, a kind of rattle, and the ever-delighting banjar.' He described the banjar as 'a coarse and rough kind of guitar'.[17]

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[16] *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies*, 2 vols (Dublin: Luke White, 1793; repr. New York: Arno Press, 1972), II, 116.
[17] John Oldmixon, *The British Empire In America,* 2 vols (London: John Nicholson, 1708), II, 123; Griffith Hughes, *The Natural History of Barbados* (London: the author, 1750; repr. New York: Arno Press, 1972), p. 16; George Pinckard, *Notes on the West Indies*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (London: Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, 1816), I, p. 126.

Lack of evidence from contemporary observers suggests that only a small range of instruments were found in Barbados during the period of slavery. This may partly have been due to the lack of appropriate materials to manufacture certain instruments from and the lack of available time to make them, but could also be attributable to the one-time prohibition of African instruments. Certainly for what instruments the slaves did make, they adapted to using the indigenous materials as close to those they were familiar with. The most commonly reported instruments were drums, horns and, later on, fiddles.

The drum was feared by the Europeans for its powers - it was known that the slaves could send messages to one another via their drums and the fear of insurrection led to them being banned. This was noted by Hans Sloane in his observations of the men and women on the plantations in Jamaica:

> They formerly on their Festivals were allowed the use of Trumpets after their Fashion and Drums made on a piece of a hollow Tree, covered on one end with any green Skin, and stretched with Thouls or Pins. But making use of these in their Wars at home in *Africa*, it was thought too much inciting them to Rebellion, and so they were prohibited by the Customs of the Island.[18]

Such banning of drums was mentioned in contemporary poetry. In *The Sugar-Cane*, published in 1764, based on observations made in St Kitts, James Grainger says 'let not thou the drum their mirth inspire', though he had previously requested that slaves be allowed 'to lead the choral dance'.[19] This appears to suggest that slaves should be allowed some entertainment, provided drums were not used.

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[18] Hans Sloane, *A Voyage to the Islands Madera, Barbados, Nieves, S. Christophers and Jamaica, with the Natural History of the Herbs and Trees, Four-Footed Beasts, Fishes, Birds, Reptiles & c.* (London: B.M., 1707), p. iii.
[19] John Gilmore, *The Poetics of Empire: A Study of James Grainger's The Sugar-Cane* (London: Athlone Press, 2000), pp. 160-1.

The drums the slaves used were generally made from hollowed out tree trunks with animal skin stretched over one end, played vertically and, according to Hughes, 'with a stick, or the fingers'. Dickson referred to the use of 'a common earthen jar' as a substitute for drums made out of wood.[20] Contemporary reports often labelled drums as kettledrums, presumably because they were one-ended and played vertically rather than that they resembled in shape the kettledrums then in use in Europe.

References to drums often include mention of other instruments such as rattles and stringed instruments. Horns were also mentioned, though these would seem to have been conch shells or gourds rather than brass instruments, or animal horns.[21] Frederick Bayley observed in the 1820s that the Crop Over festival had been made less African by the use of the fiddle, the use of the gumbay (an African drum) being extinct by then.[22] He, and others, may well have been deluded in this. Herskovits believes that, in Suriname, the Akan people from the Gold Coast of Africa transferred the power of the drum to the fiddle to get around the banning of the drum. If they did this in Suriname it is conceivable they did so elsewhere and, as discussed in Chapter 1, p. 43, Karl Watson offers strong evidence pointing to the fact that the majority of Barbadian slaves were Akan people.[23] I believe

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[20] Hughes, *The Natural History of Barbados,* p. 17. William Dickson, *Letters on Slavery* (London: J. Philips, 1784), p. 74.

[21] Contemporary writers in West Africa record the blowing of elephants' teeth (presumably tusks) as horns, but such material was not available in the Caribbean. See for example: William Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea,* 4th edn (London: Frank Cass, 1967), p. 149; *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa by Mungo Park,* ed. by Kate Ferguson Marsters (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000) pp. 129, 191. Animal horns were used in other parts of the Caribbean, for example in Jamaica where the *abeng* (a cow's horn) was used, notably by the maroons (escaped slaves) to signal danger. Leonard Barrett, (1976) *The Sun and The Drum: African Roots in Jamaican Folk Tradition* (Kingston: Sangsters Book Stores, 1976), p. 111.

[22] Frederick W. N. Bayley, *Four Years' Residence in the West Indies* (London: William Kidd, 1830), p. 436.

[23] 'The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (with special reference to Barbados)' in *Emancipation I,* ed. by Alvin O. Thompson (Barbados: University of the West Indies, 1986). Watson states that a sampling of eighteenth century slave names demonstrates that 62% of African names are Akan and that cultural evidence confirms strong Akan influences (p. 20).

therefore that this may have happened in Barbados also, hence the often-reported use of fiddles by Barbadian slaves.[24]

Ligon records observing one slave making an instrument which, from his description, resembled a xylophone, probably a West African balafon, which may have been an instrument in common usage in Africa at the time.[25] However contemporary writers of life in Barbados such as Bayley, Day, Hughes and Waller have not referred to such instruments and there is no evidence to suggest that such instruments were common amongst slaves.

References to the use of wind instruments, such as Dickson's to a black servant playing a 'pair of bag-pipes' are rare.[26] There are occasional references to trumpets and horns, but the dearth of such references led Handler and Frisbie to surmise that wind instruments 'played an insignificant role in musical activities' in Barbados.[27]

In some cases slaves and servants were encouraged to play European instruments. A painting by Hogarth in 1745 shows a young black boy, dressed in European clothing, holding a small transverse flute to his mouth and with a small drum suspended from his wrist, which he seems to be beating with a drumstick. The painting is set in the cabin of a British naval officer and may be evidence of the fact that slaves and servants were trained to play such instruments in a context

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[24] For example, Bayley, *Four Years' Residence*, p. 70; James E. Alexander, *Transatlantic Sketches*, 2 vols (London: Richard Bentley, 1833), I, 158.
[25] Richard Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes* (London: Peter Parker, 1673: repr. London: Frank Cass, 1998), p. 49.
[26] Dickson, *Letters on Slavery*, p. 76.
[27] Jerome S. Handler and Charlotte J. Frisbie, 'Aspects of Slave Life in Barbados: Music and its Cultural Context', *Caribbean Studies*, 2 (1972) 5-46 (p. 22).

other than that which will be discussed later in this chapter, pp. 130-2.[28] Many black men served in the Royal Navy and on merchant ships, which may have presented opportunities for crew members to learn to play European instruments.[29] Frederick Marryat, a British naval captain and novelist who visited Barbados around 1813, writes in *Peter Simple* of a free coloured man playing the fiddle at a dignity ball, an event sponsored by tavern and hotel owners.[30]

There is a print, widely held to depict a scene of newly emancipated slaves in Barbados, that shows a boy playing a military style drum (albeit a side drum worn and played as a bass drum would be) and another playing a concertina. This print is often used to illustrate Emancipation, but there are many inaccuracies, not least the concertina, which is not documented as being used in Barbados. John Gilmore offers substantial evidence as to why this print is, in effect, a fictitious picture of an imaginary scene.[31] Suffice to say here, it offers no authoritative evidence for the nature of Barbadian music in the nineteenth century.

## The Music

Whilst the African slaves were forcibly separated from their homeland, their communities, their possessions and often their families, and arrived in the New World with no material goods, they did have their cultural heritage. It is known from contemporaneous accounts that in some instances slave owners did everything they could to prevent their slaves from following their African traditions and indeed laws were passed empowering the owners to do so, largely for fear of

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[28] Ronald Paulson, *The Art of Hogarth*, (London: Phaidon Press, 1975), Plate 72.
[29] Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The history of black people in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 1984), pp. 19, 56-7, 192.
[30] John Gilmore, 'Captain Marryat and the Dignity Ball', *Banja: A Magazine of Barbadian Life and Culture*, 1 (1987), 59-63 (p. 61).
[31] John Gilmore, 'That Emancipation Picture...', *Banja: A Magazine of Barbadian Life and Culture*, 5 (1989-90), 10-12.

revolt. The use of drums, horns and other loud instruments was also prohibited and the slave owners were to be fined if they allowed their slaves to play such instruments. The Act that was passed in Barbados to carry this out stated:

> that all due Care be taken to restrain the Wandrings and Meetings of Negroes and other Slaves at all times, more especially on *Saturday* Nights, *Sundays,* and other Holy-days, and their using and carrying of Clubs, Wooden Swords, or other mischievous and dangerous Weapons, or using or keeping of Drums, Horns, or other loud Instruments; which may call together, or give Sign or Notice to one another of their wicked Designs and Purposes;

continuing that fines would be levied on

> whatsoever Master, Owner, or Overseer shall permit or suffer his or their Negro, or other Slave or Slaves, at any time hereafter to beat Drums, blow Horns, or use any other loud Instruments, and shall not cause his Negro-Houses once every Week to be diligently searched, and such Instruments, if any be found, cause to be burned.[32]

Dunn says 'the English disliked the racket [the Africans] made with trumpets and African hollow-log drums and banned the drums for another reason, because they could be used to signal island-wide revolts'.[33] The fear of this was quite simple, 'they feared drums as loud signals that could lead men on a battlefield. Thus they banned loud instruments, ignoring quieter ones in their laws'.[34] In reality it was difficult to enforce such bans and as the toleration of slave entertainment increased, these provisions lapsed. It became generally accepted by the planters that if the slaves were allowed some form of entertainment, such as holding a dance, that they actually worked better, appeared to be happier and this would mean increased productivity.

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[32] Act 329 dated 8 August 1688. 'An Act for the governing of Negroes' in *Acts of Assembly passed in the Island of Barbados from 1648-1718* (London: John Baskett, 1832), p. 119.
[33] Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies 1624-1713* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1973), p. 250.
[34] Rath, 'Drums and Power', p. 107.

It is evident from contemporary accounts that music was an integral part of slave life on the plantations and that despite efforts made by plantation owners, slaves were able to maintain their African musical heritage (some contemporary observations on slave music are cited later in this section). However, when and why the slaves started adopting musical features from the European population is not clear.

It is important that music making took place during slavery, though to what extent is uncertain, but this was when the development of a syncretic, creole musical tradition began. The music that was played could not have been a pure music belonging to the people from one particular region in West Africa because they had been purposely mixed so as to hinder communication between them, and therefore opportunities for creating trouble were supposedly reduced. They did however draw on the common threads, not just of spoken languages, but also of musical languages to form a creole music acceptable to all. There was singing on plantations, work songs probably predominant to ease the burden of work. There was certainly music at the weekend dances, which were opportunities for performing African music and thus retention of African traditions to some extent.

Homi Bhabha's interpretation of colonial mimicry as 'the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite'* can be applied to the slaves' adoption and adaptation of European musical traits.[35] The slaves found a way of perpetuating their African musical traditions whilst blending them with European ones to produce a syncretic musical form that

[35] *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 86.

appeared to the colonisers to mimic their music, but was not identical, and was therefore, to some degree, acceptable to them.

Undoubtedly if the Europeans found the slaves' music strange, then the slaves found the Europeans' music strange as they were unaccustomed to its timings and harmonies. If slaves were encouraged by their masters to play for dances on the plantations, or at the plantation house, this obviously gave music a different status and, maybe for some, occasional relief from plantation work. For the plantation owners they wanted slaves that worked hard and gave them no trouble, thus finding ways of entertaining the slaves at no expense was a bonus to them.

Slave dances seem to have been fairly common events, usually taking place on a Saturday night or a Sunday. If such activities had not become generally accepted the slaves might have tried to keep such activities going surreptitiously, but with activities such as music and dance it is hard to keep them concealed. Slave quarters were not that far away from plantation houses and the sound of music would carry. However the fact that they were generally tolerated was an important factor in the creolization process. A variety of musical instruments were used to provide the music for these events.

The earliest account of slave music is that by Ligon in the mid-seventeenth century who records the slaves' use of kettledrums and was intrigued by their music saying 'so strangely they varie their time, as 'tis a pleasure to the most curious ears, and it was to me one of the strangest noises that I ever heard made of one tone'.[36]

[36] *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes*, p. 48.

Generally speaking, Europeans who visited during the time of slavery and commented upon the slave dances and music, did so in derisory terms, considering it to be primitive and uncivilised. For example, Pinckard said that 'both music and dance are of a savage nature'. Dyott noted that 'the Negro dances are most curious and their music still more so'. Whilst Hughes commented 'these slaves, in some of their rude Dances to Music still ruder, use gesticulations very unseemly and wanton'.[37] After Emancipation the music and dancing of the black population continued to be regarded with contempt. A column entitled *How Christmas was Spent* noted that there were 'no vulgar exhibitions of street-dancing to the accompaniment of drums and triangles – instruments of torture in the hands of the unskilled'.[38]

**Singing**

Singing is not referred to as often as instrumental music, and was in some instances treated with the same disdain as was instrumental music, though Ligon acknowledged the quality of the slaves' voices when comparing them with voices that he had heard in Europe, commenting that he could not 'much commend that [...] but for their voices, I have heard many of them loud and sweet'.[39] Pinckard observed that the songs were 'very simple but harsh and devoid of melody'. He also commented that on hearing all the sounds made by the slaves 'a spectator would require only a slight flight of fancy to transport him to the savage wilds of Africa'.[40]

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[37] Pinckard, *Notes on the West Indies*, p. 126; *Dyott's Diary 1781-1845*, pp. 94-5; Hughes, *The Natural History of Barbados*, pp. 16-7.
[38] *Weekly Recorder*, 1 January 1898, p. 4.
[39] Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes*, p. 52.
[40] Pinckard, ibid., pp. 126-7.

Singing was probably the largest part of the slaves' musical lives – it is unimaginable that people with so little in the way of possessions would not utilise that one instrument freely available to everyone, the voice. Singing has many uses and its particular use to ease the tedium of work must have provided some solace to the slaves whereby they could retain some connection with their homeland through songs they had grown up with, and for them to bond together as a body of displaced people.

There are two slave songs written down and these have been reproduced in an article by Jerome Handler and Charlotte Frisbie on slave music in Barbados.[41] Both songs date from fairly late in slavery, by which time much creolization would have occurred. I have not analysed the music because, due to the lack of a substantial body of slave songs, there is not enough comparative material to be able to draw conclusions as to what extent these two examples are typical of Barbadian slave songs. Drawing on the little historical information available about the songs, I have studied the lyrics and attempted to interpret them in the social and cultural environment prevalent at the time they date from.

The first song was written down by Granville Sharp from information provided by William Dickson who lived in Barbados in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. As Handler and Frisbie point out, the circumstances under which the song was written down are not clear, and it is possible that it was actually written down some years after Dickson left Barbados, thus the accuracy is questionable.[42]

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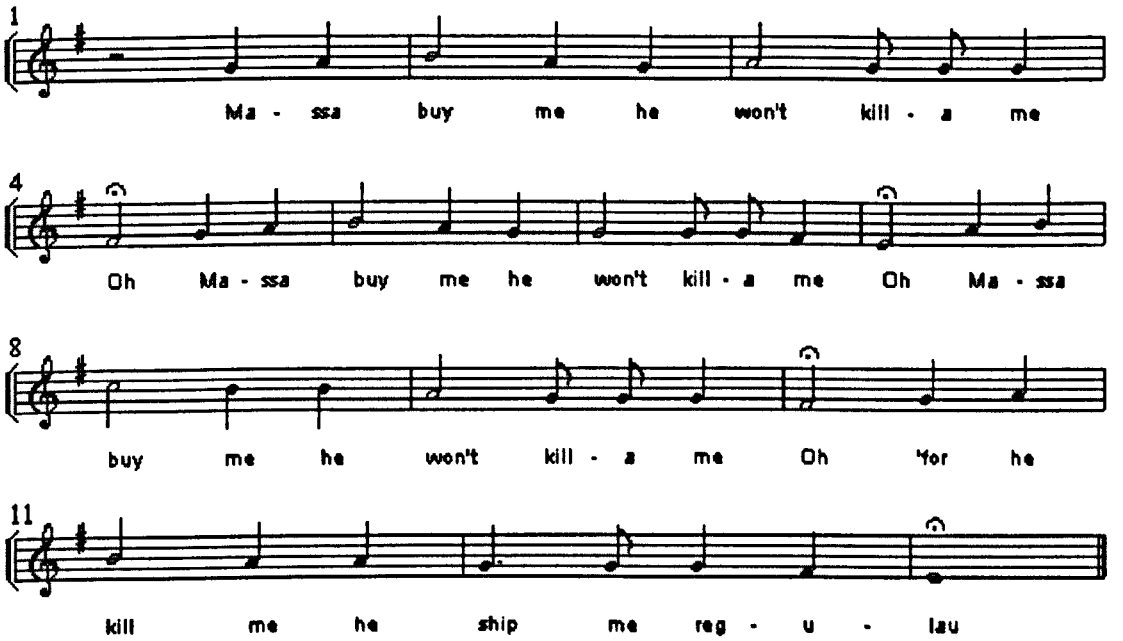
[41] Jerome S. Handler and Charlotte J. Frisbie, 'Aspects of Slave Life in Barbados: Music and its Cultural Context', *Caribbean Studies*, 2 (1972), 5-46 (Plate II, facing p. 17).
[42] Ibid., Note 9, pp. 23-4.

Figure 1: Verse




The song is simple and repetitive. The melody has been notated as if in 4/4 time and each phrase is equivalent to three bars in length in that time. I suspect that either Dickson, or the person who wrote it down for him, conveniently put this into a time with which they were familiar. The range is less than an octave and the melody moves by step, except for one leap of a fourth in bar 7. Each phrase is the same basic shape, rising by step to the third note, then falling by step with some repeated notes. There is some slight rhythmic variation in bar 12, where a dotted crotchet and quaver are followed by two crotchets, instead of a minim and two quavers as in bars 3, 6, and 9. The notes accompanying the notation suggest the song was 'generally in a minor key' and assumes E minor for this transcription.

The song is described as being led by one slave whilst at work, and the rest of the slaves join in with the chorus – the well-known call and response format of African

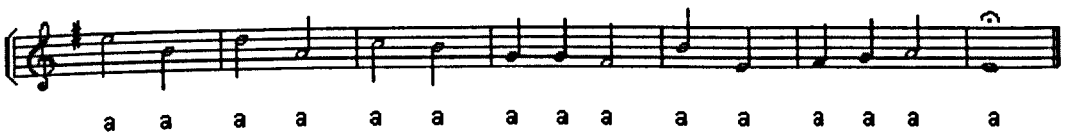
music.[43] The lyrics relate to the relationship between master and slave, seemingly the belief that because the master has paid money for the slave, he would not kill him, or have him sentenced to death (presumably for some wrong doing). The final line suggests that the master would prefer to ship the slave off the island if there was a need to dispose of the slave, which would obviously make economic sense as the plantations were run for profit, and undoubtedly the master, who was most likely an overseer or manager, would have been accountable to the plantation owner if slaves were lost without good reason or financial recompense.

There is a second verse:

'for I live with a bad man oh la
'for I live with a bad man obudda-bo
'for I live with a bad man oh la
'for I would go to the River side regulau

It is possible that the 'bad man' is not the master referred to in the previous verse and that the song may have been sung by a woman lamenting the fact that she lives with 'a bad man', probably her husband or partner. If this is the case, she is saying that he prevents her going to the riverside as often as she used to. Rivers are not common in Barbados, but this may be a reference to a stream or other source of water where women would gather to do their laundry. The 'bad man' may not have liked his woman going there and participating in the gossip that undoubtedly would develop at such gatherings, and so prevented her going regularly.

Figure 2: Chorus




[43] The Dickson song has been included in a database of information connected with the slave trade and can be seen at the following website: http://gropius.lib.virginia.edu/SlaveTrade

The chorus is seven bars in length. The melody has a range of one octave and most of the movement is by leaps of thirds and fourths, with some movement by step and one downward leap of a fifth in bar 5. Except for in bars 4 and 6 where there are two crotchets and a minim, all notes are minims.

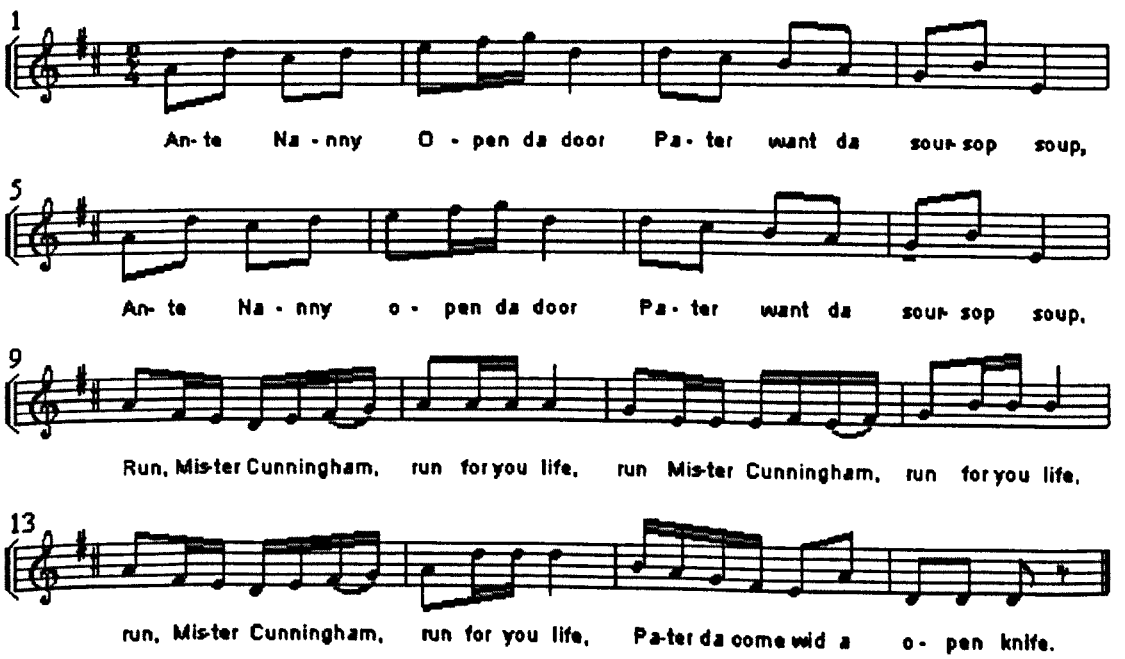
The chorus is simply 'a' which, according to the accompanying notes, was sounded like the French 'ai' and English 'a'. A different version of the chorus is also noted, but how this fits in musically is not described:

a a a a a a a a O bi

The 'O bi' may point to some connection with the slave practice of Obeah (or Obia), which was discussed in Chapter 1, pp. 52-3.

The second slave song was originally published in 1834 by Trelawny Wentworth in his *West India Sketch Book* and has been reproduced in *Folk Songs of Barbados*, which now places it firmly in the folk repertoire of the country.

Figure 3



Marshall et al. suggest that 'the melody was probably borrowed from an English folk song of an earlier age', and the structure and tonality of the song do indeed suggest that the melody is of European origin, following a four-line format, with the first line repeated exactly.[44] The first half of the rhythm of the third line is repeated, but bars 15 and 16 are varied. The range of the melody covers one and a half octaves, and whilst there is quite a lot of movement by step, there are also some leaps of fourths and fifths.

Whilst Wentworth published the song in 1834, Marshall et al. state that 'the Honourable H. A. Vaughan places its origin at around 1800' though on what evidence this was done is not stated. However, Fraser et al. suggest that the song is about Major-General James Cunninghame, Governor of Barbados from 1780-2, which could date the song even earlier.[45] Wentworth states that the 'Mulatto wench' who sang the song for him, said that Mr Cunningham 'was a hero of other days who had been immortalized in song'.[46] However, Fraser et al. say that Cunninghame was not at all popular, so it seems unlikely he would have been immortalised as a hero. It is of course possible that the meaning of the song had been changed, or the story attached to it had been reinterpreted.

The lyrics are to do with a case of unfaithfulness, hence Mr Cunningham being told to run for his life as Pater is coming for soursop soup, 'a delicate euphemism

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[44] In *Folk Songs of Barbados* the song is notated in the key of C major and there are a few minor differences in the spelling of some words. Trevor Marshall, Peggy McGeary and Grace Thompson, *Folk Songs of Barbados* (Kingston: Ian Randle, 1996), pp. 74-5.
[45] H. Fraser et al., *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage* (Kingston: Heinemann Caribbean, 1990), p. 55.
[46] Trelawny Wentworth, *The West India Sketch Book*, 2 vols (London: n. pub., 1834), cited in *After Africa: Extracts from British Travel Accounts and Journals of the Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth Centuries concerning the Slaves, their Manners, and Customs in the British West Indies*, ed. by Roger D. Abrahams and John F. Szwed (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 311-2.

for something else', according to Marshall et al.[47] The threat of Pater's open knife suggests that he is aware of the affair and he will kill the man concerned if he has a chance. Marshall et al. say that 'Pater' is not used elsewhere in Barbadian folk literature, which suggests that this could also have been borrowed along with the tune, from an English song, possibly adapting the words to suit the Barbadian context. Having someone warning of the approach of 'Pater' suggests that Mr Cunningham may have been concerned about being caught, perhaps if he was, as suggested earlier, the Governor (or in some position of authority before he became Governor), or simply because he knew that Pater was likely to be violent. The subject matter suggests that this might have been a song that started out life in a plantation house where such a scenario might have taken place. Some slaves worked in the plantation houses where they might have been exposed to European music, which could account for the borrowing of the melody of this particular song.

There is a second verse given in *Folk Songs of Barbados*, which conveys the same sentiment in the lyrics, reinforced by the threat of a loaded gun at the end:

> Auntie Nanny, open de door
> Pater really want de sour-sop soup
> Run, Mister Cunningham, run, run, run
> Run, Mister Cunningham, run, run, run
> Run, Mister Cunningham, run, run, run
> Pater he come wid a loaded gun[48]

The changes in the second line would require changing the first two quavers to four semiquavers to accommodate the extra word 'really' in bar 3. One less word in lines 3, 4 and 5 would mean changing the two semiquavers in bars 10, 12 and 14 to a quaver.

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[47] Marshall et al., *Folk Songs of Barbados*, p. 74.
[48] Ibid., p. 75.

The Dickson song is dirge-like, with the subject matter of the lyrics contributing to the feeling of the song. The rhythm is steady and contains few short notes, whereas the Wentworth song is comprised mainly of short notes, which gives it quite a bouncy rhythm. The Dickson song moves by step except for one leap, which makes for little melodic variation. In comparison, the Wentworth song flows very easily with melodic movement by step and by leap, and the liveliness of the melody reflects the lyrics, which impart a certain amount of urgency. As there are no other slave songs to compare these to, it is not possible to say which was more typical. Contemporary writers do not provide accounts that suggest that slaves sang in a particular style. Dickson described another call and response style song as being loud and lively. The one reproduced here does not give the impression of being lively, but this could be because he was describing a song used for a different purpose. I believe the Dickson song to be more probably the type of song that slaves would have sung whilst working, the call and response nature of the song reflecting their African musical traditions. The simple, repetitive lyrics convey a message that the slaves would perhaps have felt important to remember, and this might have also been some sort of reminder to their overseer not to punish them too harshly. The Wentworth song does not seem as relevant to slave life. Whilst there were undoubtedly cases of unfaithfulness amongst slaves, the lyrics point to this being about people of higher social status. It also appears to relate to a particular event, rather than being a general song related to day-to-day living.

## Musicians

The skills required to play music were passed on by oral methods and observation. Most of the European music played by slaves was probably learned in imitation of their masters' music.

Some slave owners were aware of their slaves' musical ability and this was sometimes used as a means of identification when a slave had run away from his plantation. An advert placed in the *Barbados Mercury* of 13 December 1783 warns against employing a mulatto man, Philip, 'in any capacity whatsoever either taylor, carpenter, or fiddler.' In the same newspaper on 10 January 1784 an advert similarly cautions against employing Romeo, a drummer. Christopher Small, referring to the Americas in general, suggests:

> there is abundant evidence that many slavemasters encouraged their slaves to play, and even supplied them, not only with instruments, but even with instruction, in order that they might provide entertainment and dance music on the often remote plantations; it was a matter of prestige to have slaves who could perform in this way, and skill on fiddle and banjo, as well as on flute and clarinet and even French horn, would enhance a slave's saleable value.[49]

Unfortunately Small does not cite any of this evidence and I have not been able to locate any relating to Barbados. The Barbadian novelist, J. W. Orderson, writing about the period of the 1780/90s, makes reference to families dancing to 'violin, pipe and tabor', but does not indicate whether these were played by servants or family members.[50] One example of a slave playing for whites is cited by Epstein who notes a case recorded in Virginian court records in the 1690s where a black fiddler had played for whites to dance.[51]

The slave musicians were undoubtedly important people in slave society for they were able to provide some respite from the drudgery of working on the plantation. They also provided some form of link with the slaves' homeland through their

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[49] Christopher Small, *Music of the Common Tongue* (London: John Calder, 1987), p. 38.
[50] J. W. Orderson, *Creoleana: or, Social and Domestic Scenes and Incidents in Barbadian Days of Yore, and The Fair Barbadian and Faithful Black*, ed. by John Gilmore (Oxford: Macmillan, 2002), p. 36.
[51] Dena J. Epstein, 'African Music in British and French America', *Musical Quarterly USA*, 59 (1973) 61-91 (p. 83).

music. Even if African instruments were not allowed, the rhythms and melodies of their musical traditions must have been some source of comfort and were 'the one cohesive element that spiritually bound the slaves together and enabled them to escape momentarily the frustrations and bitterness of their own lives'.[52]

Interestingly, a picture by B. Stennett entitled *Slaves in Barbados*, first published in 1820, shows a drummer sitting down with a large cylindrical drum between his legs, his hands raised above the head with no evidence of beaters.[53] This picture is later reprinted entitled *Slaves in Barbados about 1807*.[54] The accuracy of this is of course debatable, but if genuine, then the fact that slaves were using African style drums at this late date is interesting.

As slave numbers increased by natural reproduction, fewer slaves were imported from Africa. This led to a dilution of African elements in each successive generation as less fresh input of skills and knowledge meant that what was passed on was not necessarily purely African, but had become a creole tradition born out of enforced circumstances rather than choice. However, there was still some fresh input of things African as late in slavery as the early nineteenth century. In 1807, the year the Act was passed to abolish the slave trade, there were still some African slaves imported into Barbados, evidenced by adverts placed in the *Barbados Mercury and Bridgetown Gazette* for the sale of Windward and Gold

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[52] Lisa Lekis, 'The Origin and Development of Ethnic Caribbean Dance and Music' (doctoral dissertation, University of Florida, 1956), p. 17.
[53] John Augustine Waller, *A Voyage in the West Indies containing various observations made during a residence in Barbados and several of the Leeward Islands* (London: R. Philips, 1820), facing p. 20.
[54] Neville Connell, *A Short History of Barbados* (St Michael, Barbados: Barbados Museum and Historical Society, 1960), facing p. 9.

Coast slaves.[55] By the time of Emancipation in 1838, nearly two hundred years after the first slaves were brought from Africa, the slaves were predominantly creole, thus the link with Africa was diminished.[56]

## Music for Holidays and Festivals

Music was important during slavery for the traditional festivals of Crop Over, Christmas and other public holidays, as it still is today. Poole observed at Christmas in 1748 that 'about three o'clock this morning music began to play in the streets, and continued till near six. It consisted of the violin and hautboy, which were played by Negroes walking the streets'.[57]

For the slaves, the celebration of a successful harvest in Barbados was not an alien phenomenon as many came from regions 'with a strong tradition of harvest festivals', such as the West African tradition of the Yam Festival.[58] This festival as described by Bowdich in 1817, was an annual festival held at the maturity of the vegetable which was planted in December but not ready until September. During the festival theft or assault were not punishable, 'but the grossest liberty prevails, and each sex abandons itself to its passions'. There is a drawing by Bowdich entitled *The First Day of the Yam Festival* that shows, among other things, various drums, some vertically held flutes, horns and lyre type instruments.[59] In Jamaica

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[55] *Barbados Mercury and Bridgetown Gazette* – 'The Last Cargo that will probably be retailed in this Island', 1 August 1807, p. 1 – an advert for 197 Gold Coast Slaves.' 'Windward Coast Slaves', 26 December 1807, p. 1 – '100 Windward Coast Slaves just arrived in the brig Active'.
[56] In 1816, 93% of slaves were creole. Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (London: Cornell University Press, 1982), p. 257.
[57] Robert Poole, 'The Beneficent Bee or Traveller's Companion' ed. by Karl Watson, *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society*, 46 (2000), 174-239 (p. 182).
[58] Edwina Ashie-Nikoi, 'Cohobblopot: Africanisms in Barbadian Culture through the Lens of Crop-Over' in *Journal of Caribbean History*, 32 (1998), 82-120 (p. 90).
[59] T. Edward Bowdich, *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee* (London: John Murray, 1819), pp. 274-5.

the Yam Festival continued as a separate event to Crop Over, albeit on a smaller scale, but this does not seem to have happened in Barbados.[60]

The Crop Over festival was the Barbadian adaptation of the Anglican Harvest Home festival.[61] Crop Over was held to celebrate the cutting of the last sugar canes and the celebrations included ceremonies, much food and drink, music and dancing. The celebrations would have been held in the mill yard and were a rare time when all plantation employees mixed together regardless of colour or rank. Exactly when such as festival started is not known but references to harvest home celebrations date back to the late eighteenth century as recorded by the manager of Newton Plantation in 1798 who, in a letter he sent to the owner in England, said he 'had held a dinner and sober dance for the slaves'.[62] In the early nineteenth century Bayley observed a similar celebration describing it as 'an assembly of these oppressed people on their grand day of jubilee, which they call "crop-over"'.[63] Bayley's early reference to the term 'crop over' suggests that the name applied by the slaves to the festival is the one that has continued to be used despite the white population referring to it as harvest home. The festival was an opportunity for the workers to indulge before the coming months of potential hardship when the amount of work on the plantations was significantly reduced, leaving them with very little to live on.

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[60] Orlando Patterson, *The Sociology of Slavery: An Analysis of the Origins, Development and Structure of Negro Slave Society in Jamaica* (London: Associated University Presses, 1967), pp. 236, 242.
[61] Crop Over is Barbados' foremost festival today and its modern role is discussed in Chapter 4, pp. 280-84.
[62] Fraser et al., *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage*, p. 53.
[63] Frederick W. N. Bayley, *Four Years' Residence in the West Indies* (London: William Kidd, 1830) p. 436.

Such festivities were however not universally popular and were discouraged by missionaries who saw them 'as being incompatible with church membership'.[64] An article in the *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society* says that 'bands provided by the estates accompanied the processions' at Crop Over.[65] There is no mention of what type of music these bands played nor of whom the musicians might have been. It does suggest however that some sort of payment was made for music for entertaining the plantation workers. The article does not refer to a specific period in time, however the use of the term 'labourers' rather than slaves suggests it refers to the post-Emancipation period.[66] There are however pre-Emancipation references to musicians being given payment by participants in dances. For example, Alexander wrote that 'those who wished to dance the Joan-Johnny stepped forward [and] presented the leader of the band with a bit' (a coin of small value).[67] Pinckard also noted that those joining in made 'a small contribution to the band at the time of stepping into the circle'.[68]

An article from the *Barbados Agricultural Reporter* in 1897 mentions 'a band of Negro men and boys playing the violin, the tambourine, the drum, the triangle and the blowing of a horn'.[69] The article says that the women sang 'familiar plantation melodies' while the band played. Unfortunately none of the melodies are mentioned, but this does point to the division of men playing instruments, and

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[64] Kingsley Lewis, *The Moravian Mission in Barbados 1816-1886: A Study of the Historical Context and Theological Significance of a Minority Church Among an Oppressed People* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1985), p. 177.
[65] Anon., 'Old Plantation Customs', *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society*, 7 (1940), 109-5 (p. 111).
[66] I have examined Drax Hall Plantation Accounts for the months of July, August, December and January in the years 1815-25 and 1830-1 to try to ascertain whether payment was made for bands to play. Unfortunately I did not find any such references, but more exhaustive searches may discover some evidence.
[67] James E. Alexander, *Transatlantic Sketches*, 2 vols (London: Richard Bentley, 1833), I, 158.
[68] Pinckard, *Notes on the West Indies*, p. 129.
[69] 'A Day on a Sugar Plantation in Barbados', *Barbados Agricultural Reporter*, 23 and 26 July 1897, Extracted from Research Notes A-H, Barbados Department of Archives.

women only participating through song. The role of women in tuk is discussed later, pp. 188-9. Although the article is entitled 'A Day on a Sugar Plantation in Barbados', its publication in July indicates it describes a day celebrating the Crop Over festival, rather than an ordinary working day, as does the mention of the figure of 'Old Harding', an effigy made from cane trash, burned as part of the festivities, and symbolic of the hard times to come after the crop.

Marshall et al. suggest that the 'music played mainly among the mass of the people on Sunday afternoons, on picnics and excursions, and on public holidays' from around the 1860s was tuk.[70] There is no evidence to substantiate this, but as I will discuss in Chapter 3, pp. 241-2, the development of the Barbados Landship in the 1860s may point to the parallel development of the tuk band.

## Slave Dances

Contemporary writers frequently described the recreational activities of slaves and a picture of the significance of these to the slaves, and to their masters, can be drawn from these. In 1729 Holt reported slaves holding gatherings on Sundays 'with their various instruments of horrid music howling and dancing about'.[71]

Like music, dancing was an opportunity for slaves to escape the monotony of their lives and establish their creole culture. Because of the mixing of people from different parts of West Africa they could not retain their culture in its purest form, but had to adapt and borrow to create musical and dance forms that satisfied the needs of them all. This opportunity to escape reality was undoubtedly one reason that the slaves threw themselves into such activity with all their energy as noted by

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[70] *Folk Songs of Barbados*, p. 31.
[71] A. Holt – Letter to Bishop Gordon, Barbados, 7 March 1729 cited in Handler and Frisbie, 'Aspects of Slave Life in Barbados', p. 14.

de Rochefort, 'when their Masters give them the liberty to recreate themselves, they reciprocally visit one the other, and pass away whole nights in playing, dancing, and other pastimes and divertisments'.[72]

Ligon observed that the slaves 'may dance a whole day, and ne'r heat themselves'.[73] Pinckard noted they were 'passionately fond of dancing' and indeed it formed a key part of their recreation, most commonly at the weekend dance, usually held on a Saturday night.[74] Dances were also held on holidays and for plantation festivals. The dances would probably have been held on the plantation in the slaves' living area, or possibly the mill yard. The dances often continued well into the night, or for many hours during the day. Pinckard commented:

> Sunday offering them an interval from toil, is generally devoted to their favourite amusement. Instead of remaining at rest, they undergo more fatigue, or at least more personal exertion, during their gala hours of Saturday night and Sunday, than is demanded from them, in labour, during any four days of the week.[75]

They would form a circle with the musicians at the centre and then those wishing to dance would enter the circle. Early dances seem to have precluded men and women from dancing together. Ligon specified that there was 'no mixt dancing'. However, later observers do mention couples dancing; Alexander noted that 'a couple would twist their bodies, thump the ground with their heels, and circle round one another to the inspiring strains'. Oldmixon observed that:

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[72] Charles de Rochefort, *The History of the Caribby-Islands*, trans. by John Davies (London: J. M. for Thomas Dring and John Starkey, 1666), p. 202.
[73] Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes*, p. 50.
[74] *Notes on the West Indies*, p. 126.
[75] Ibid., p. 126.

> For their diversions on Sundays, the Generality of them dance, or wrestle all Day, the Men and Women together. In Mr. *Ligon*'s time, the Men danc'd by themselves, and the Women by themselves, but 'tis not so in ours.[76]

There were various styles of dancing, seemingly dominated by the movement of the upper body and, to the eyes of the European observers of the time, it was not decent, as described by Pinckard:

> Their approaches, with the figure of the dance, and the attitudes and inflexions in which they are made, are highly indecent; but of this they seem to be wholly unconscious, for the gravity, I might say the solemnity of countenance, under which all this passes, is peculiarly striking, indeed almost ridiculous. Not a smile, not a significant glance, nor an immodest look escapes from either sex: but they meet, in very indecent attitudes, under the most settled, and unmeaning gravity of countenance. Occasionally they change the figure by stamping upon the feet, or making a more general movement of the person, but these are only temporary variations; the twistings and turnings of the body seeming to constitute the supreme excellence of the dance.[77]

The slaves' dances were thought by some to be imitating sex thus causing them to be labelled indecent or heathen. Interestingly today there is a style of dancing in Barbados known as wukkin' up (or working up), which is considered to be similarly indecent by many Barbadians. It usually involves a couple, not necessarily male and female, dancing together with the majority of the body movement concentrated in the pelvic region. I have seen two women wukkin' up together, and even two women and a man – all very suggestive movements, but with nothing serious in mind for as Watson says 'the objective is not to entice one's partner to bed, rather to amuse oneself'.[78] This is not exclusive to Barbados and as with tuk type musics, it is probably found throughout the Caribbean and

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[76] Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes*, p. 50.
Alexander, *Transatlantic Sketches*, p. 158
Oldmixon, *The British Empire In America*, p. 123.
[77] Pinckard, *Notes on the West* Indies, pp. 127-8.
[78] Karl Watson, *The Civilised Island: Barbados A Social History 1750-1816* (St George, Barbados: Caribbean Graphic Production, 1979), p. 85.

beyond. One example I have found is in Mississippi where in 1978 Alan Lomax witnessed such dancing to fife and drum music at picnics he attended.[79] Another example is from Senegal, where a journalist describes 'the "ventilator", a thrusting of pelvis, rotating of hips [...] nothing short of simulated sex'.[80] This type of dancing may well appear shocking to outsiders.

In 1796, in Bridgetown, William Dyott wrote the following:

> The negro dances are most curious, and their music still more so. The dance is a kind of reel performed by two or three of each sex; and the music consists of the head of a cask or tub on which they beat with something like a drumstick. The other instrument is made of two cocoanut shells, which they strike together in time with the tambourine. These dolorous sounds are accompanied by the voices of half the surrounding circle, making on the whole but a most dismal concert. It is astonishing with what very exact movements they keep time, and though they display wonderful agility in their motions, still there is so great an appearance of lasciviousness in the whole dance.[81]

As has been discussed in Chapter 1, p. 51, a more relaxed system of slave control developed from early in the eighteenth century and 'the weekend slave dances became a visible part of Barbadian slave culture', and thus undoubtedly an integral part of Barbadian culture.[82]

The dance most often mentioned in contemporary writing was the Joan and Johnny, sometimes referred to as the Joan and John or Jo and Johnny. The origin of the name is not known. Janice Millington describes this dance as a fertility dance. She says it was energetic and 'allowed women to show off to admiring

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[79] Alan Lomax, *The Land Where the Blues Began* (London: Minerva Education - Mandarin Paperbacks, 1994), pp. 340-1.
[80] Anthony Sattin, 'Rhythm Nations', *Sunday Times*, 10 February 2002, p. 1.
[81] *Dyott's Diary*, pp. 94-5.
[82] Hilary Beckles and Karl Watson, 'Social Protest and Labour Bargaining: The Changing Nature of Slaves' Responses to Plantation Life in 18th Century Barbados', *Slavery and Abolition*, 8 (1987), 272-93 (p. 274).

men, who often had a chance to do the same'.[83] In September 1837 Colthurst described the Joan and Johnny as 'a barbarous African dance, to more barbarous music, purely savage'. Colthurst was a special magistrate and he commented that quadrilles (the European dance) were one of the delights of the black and coloured population. He recorded that 'a great part of his time on every Friday evening, was taken up by signing the usual *permits* for a dance or quadrille party'.[84] According to Watson the Jo and Johnny was danced in Barbados until the late 1920s and it was 'danced exclusively by the lower classes, more frequently in the country districts than in town and was a partnered dance, probably based on some adaptation of the quadrille or an eighteenth century country dance'.[85] These dances were significant as attested by John Davy:

> A light hearted people, given to pleasure and amusement, they are fond of dancing and singing, and their merry meetings – most merry and noisy they are – have always these accompaniment. Their dances, especially on Saturday night are said to be, not of the most decorous kind. Their favourite instruments are the fiddle, great drum and triangle. When they begin, they hardly know when to stop, exhibiting an activity and energy increasing with exertion, and almost inexhaustible.[86]

In neighbouring St Vincent, Mrs Carmichael noted that native Africans danced:

> their own African dances to the drum, while the creole negroes consider a fiddle genteeler; though of an evening among themselves they will sing, dance and beat the drum, yet they would not produce this instrument at a grand party. Fiddles and tambourines, with triangles are essential there.[87]

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[83] Janice Millington, 'Barbados' in *South America, Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean*, ed. by Dale A. Olsen, and Daniel E. Sheehy, The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, 2 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), pp. 813-21 (p. 816).
[84] *The Colthurst Journal: Journal of a Special Magistrate in the Islands of Barbados and St Vincent July 1835-September 1838,* ed. by Woodville K. Marshall (New York: KTO Press, 1977), pp. 134-5.
[85] *The Civilised Island,* p. 85.
[86] *The West Indies before and since Slave Emancipation* (London: W and F G Cash, 1854) p. 102.
[87] *Domestic Manners and Social Condition of the White, Coloured, and Negro Population of the West Indies,* 2 vols (London: Whittacker, Treacher, 1833; repr. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), I, 292.

Moravian missionaries disapproved of such activities believing they were not suitable. One missionary wrote in 1825 that too many slaves were engaged in 'the dancing and revelry [...] from Saturday evening to Sunday night', which he said precluded 'attention to more serious concerns'. Presumably he meant going to church.[88] In 1826 another missionary attributed the poor attendance at a church service to a dance held near the church to which 'slaves could be seen flocking [...] from various directions in their hundreds and they danced in the open air to the sound of music which could be heard from the mission premises'.[89] In 1833 another missionary described a 'wild heathenish dance' that lasted all night.[90] Such negative attitudes towards these activities continued after Emancipation and Lewis points out that Henry Moore, the first black Moravian missionary, 'was disciplining members for taking part in such rejoicings' as Crop Over as late as 1875.[91]

None of the contemporary writers about Barbados write of slaves performing what is now known as limbo. Limbo is thought to have originated on the slave ships during the Middle Passage. Due to the extremely confined space below decks, the slaves were forced to contort themselves whenever they were required to move. Wilson Harris suggests limbo 'reflects a certain kind of gateway to or threshold of a new world' through which the slaves freed themselves from the cramped conditions on the ships before beginning a new life.[92]

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[88] Samuel Brunner quoted in Kingsley Lewis, *The Moravian Mission in Barbados 1816-1886: A Study of the Historical Context and Theological Significance of a Minority Church Among an Oppressed People* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1985), p. 176.
[89] John Taylor quoted in Lewis, ibid., p. 176.
[90] John Zippel quoted in Lewis, ibid., p. 177.
[91] Lewis, ibid., p. 177.
[92] Wilson Harris, *History, Fable & Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas* (Wellesley: Calaloux Publishers, 1995), p. 19.

Today limbo is commonly found in cultural shows and entertainment in Barbados (and elsewhere) and the performance is considered to be an acrobatic feat. The only survival of limbo in dance form in Barbados is that in the wangle-low, one of the dance movements performed by the Barbados Landship, which will be discussed in Chapter 3, pp. 237-240.

After Emancipation the dances continued to be an important recreational activity for the working classes for, as noted by Chester at the end of the 1860s, 'the labouring classes in Barbados are badly off for amusements'. He describes a harvest home at the end of the crop-gathering, and says that dancing carried on 'to the sound of fiddles and a tambourine'.[93] In 1889 it was noted that 'dancing parties' took place over the Christmas holiday and that 'the time of "Joe-and-Johnnies" and drunken brawls is past and gone for ever'.[94]

Dances were an opportunity not just for music and dancing, but to socialise, exchange news and to indulge in alcohol, which may have played some part in the negative light in which these dances were held by the upper classes. In 1843 a case for assault was opened by the Attorney General, and he 'condemned strongly those night dances which are so fashionable amongst the Negroes and at which the present murderous assault was committed'.[95] Such matters coming to light would have done little to improve the reputation of such events, particularly when violent incidents arising at dances for seemingly trivial reasons ended up in court.

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[93] *Chester's Barbados: The Barbados Chapters from Transatlantic Sketches by the Rev. Greville John Chester*, ed. by John Gilmore (St James, Barbados: National Cultural Foundation, 1990), pp. 32-3.
[94] *Times*, 28 December 1889, p. 21.
[95] *Barbadian*, 12 August 1843, p. 2.

Hearings on 13 December 1848 included a case where the prisoner was charged with grievous bodily harm against the master of the dance who he accused of 'having broke up the dance in order to deprive him of a jig.' A case on 14 December 1848 heard that the accused:

> who did not dance properly was laughed at. He immediately got angry, broke up the dance, and sent a boy for a razor, with which he gave the prosecutor "a wipe" across his back, and one on his arm.[96]

After Emancipation little changed on the plantations during the apprenticeship system. Even after full Emancipation there were few options open to the plantation workers, many of whom simply carried on working on the plantations. The weekend dances that had been held on the plantations during slavery continued but in different venues. The musicians obviously found they were needed at these dances and could charge for their services. Actually working for money gave the workers the freedom to purchase items previously unavailable to them. Some musicians may have sought to improve their playing by buying instruments, but the only ones they could buy in shops were European instruments. Advertisements in the *Barbados Mercury and Bridgetown Gazette* point to the popularity of such instruments. For example in 1839, Benjamin Elkin & Co. advertised the arrival from London of guitars, and violin and guitar strings. John C. Abrams advertised the auction of two hundred 'very excellent violins'.[97]

Late in the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, as other employment opportunities arose, not all musicians were employed on the plantations. However because the black community was predominantly employed in agriculture and industry, their music was deemed to belong to the working classes and their music

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[96] *Barbadian*, 20 December 1848, p. 1.
[97] *Barbados Mercury and Bridgetown Gazette*, 2 July 1839, p. 1.
*Barbados Mercury and Bridgetown Gazette*, 31 August 1839, p.2.

was considered to be inferior to other musics. This stigma was perpetuated through the generations and for much of the twentieth century the majority of black music was looked down on by the rest of the population. It was not until after Independence was gained in 1966 that changes started as awareness developed of the cultural heritage of the black population and this was when the foundations of tuk's revival seem to have been laid.

## AFRICAN MUSIC

African music is inextricable from other aspects of African culture such as dance, religion and folklore, and is an integral part of everyday life. Music exists for every occasion, to mark important events, such as birth, marriage and death; work songs, and songs to praise or criticise the prominent members of society. The size of Africa, and the diversity of its peoples and cultures precludes most of it from my research. The area I have concentrated on is what is generally known today as West Africa, from Senegal to the Congo, the geographic region from where the slave trade operated, often called Guinea by the early travellers there. The Europeans who travelled to Africa and the Americas during the time of the slave trade had little if any concept of what African music was about. This led to their negative, condescending reports on music and indeed other aspects of African culture, which no doubt influenced the minds of many.

Thornton says that each African court had professional musicians and that:

> every musical performance even in villages was the work of specialists, even though the community as a whole might join in. Thus, only if musicians were enslaved and crossed the Atlantic could African music be produced in America – for without the specialist the ordinary slave could not

> have music and would perforce have to accept whatever music was available, gradually accepting it as his own.[98]

This could partially explain Barbadian slaves' gradual adoption and integration of British military style music with their own, which will be discussed later in this chapter, see pp. 125-32.

The professional musicians would have fallen into two categories - the bards and the minstrels. The bards were the teachers of their community, transmitting the history of their people in song and story, and praising their chiefs. The minstrels would travel between different villages participating in religious and secular ceremonies. A common feature of African music is what is known today as 'call and response' where one person sings a line or a verse, and he is responded to by the audience with a refrain. Often the lead singer would improvise to suit the needs of the occasion whilst the chorus would be a set refrain. The song format of calypso now common in the Caribbean is said to derive from African songs of wit and satire. A nineteenth-century account of African songs suggests this is so:

> They are very expert in adapting the subjects of these songs to current events, and indulge in mocking ridicule, in biting sarcasm, in fulsome flattery, or in just praise of men and things, according as circumstances seem to demand.[99]

As will be discussed in Chapter 4, pp. 261-7, this is clearly the format upon which calypso is based.

The instrumental music of West Africa has two key features. The first is that metal percussion is important. This is not necessarily a specific instrument as any piece

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[98] John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1680* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 223-4.
[99] Brodie Cruickshank, *Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast of Africa*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (London: Frank Cass, 1966), II, 267.

of metal that resonates well can be used. Bells were commonly used, played by striking them with a metal rod. This use of metal percussion has spread to many musical cultures developed from West African musics.

The second key feature is the importance of drums, which Agawu describes as being West African instrumental music's 'chief vehicle'. Whilst many observers of African music have formed the view that drumming is the foundation of African music, Agawu contends that whilst drumming and dancing are the most prevalent forms of recreation, 'music is founded on language, not on drumming, for unless one understands the rhythmic formations that stem from language, one misses a crucial dimension in what would appear to be a purely instrumental genre'.[100]

An interesting observation on the perceived lack of melody in the slaves' music was made by Richard Ligon in Barbados who said:

> the drum all men know, has but one tone; and therefore variety of tunes have little to do in this musick [...] and if they had the variety of tune, which gives the greater scope in Musick, as they have of time, they would do wonders in that Art.[101]

What he, and others, misunderstood was the fact that drums can be used to relay messages. Many did however grasp this point and this was one of the reasons that European planters banned the use of drums on plantations. Agawu explains that in West African drumming 'three principal modes may be distinguished: the speech mode, the signal mode, and the dance mode'.[102] In the speech mode the drummer plays speech rhythms on the drums. The signal mode is similar to the speech mode but as the name suggests, it is coded in a certain way so that only

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[100] Kofi Agawu, 'The Rhythmic Structure of West African Music' *Journal of Musicology,* 5 (1987), 400-418 (pp. 414-5).
[101] Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes,* p. 48.
[102] Agawu, ibid., p. 415.

select listeners can interpret what is being said. The dance mode uses more regular rhythms to create metre in the music.

Perhaps even before the slaves' departure on the Middle Passage, some Africans were able to play European instruments. Cruickshank said that 'many of them have learned to play upon English fifes, flutes, flageolets and bugles. They pick up our airs with the greatest facility, and play them tolerably after hearing them a few times'.[103] This may well have been the assimilation that paved the way for the adoption of such instruments when enslaved Africans reached the New World where 'before the end of the seventeenth century [they] were playing European instruments well and performing for the dancing of whites'.[104]

Best has suggested that 'the Bajan phenomenon of tuk band music [...] dates back to the earliest days when the slaves arrived. The band and its music symbolize the continuation of African musical expression in the New World'.[105] As will be discussed during this thesis, there is no evidence on which to base such a statement, thus this must be speculation or possibly a result of the desire to establish the African roots of modern Barbadian culture.

## Highlife

One music said to have influenced tuk is highlife from West Africa. Highlife is itself a fusion of musics from various sources, some the same influences as tuk. It seems likely therefore that the influences, rather than the actual music are what

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[103] Cruickshank, *Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast of Africa*, p. 269.
[104] Dena J. Epstein, *Sinful Tunes and Spirituals: Black Folk Music to the Civil War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977), p. 112.
[105] Curwen Best, *'Banja': excavating inter-facing and re-placing African-Caribbean art* (doctoral thesis, University of Birmingham, 1993), p. 155.

can be heard in both musics. Highlife developed in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century in the towns on the West African coast.

According to Collins it is 'a fusion of indigenous dance rhythms and melodies with influences from the West'. These influences included regimental bands made up of European-trained African musicians, sea shanties and folk songs brought by sailors including black seamen from the United States and West Indies. Highlife has, unlike tuk, held some status; 'any town in southern Ghana would only be satisfied if they had [...] a band to play regimental marches and highlifes on Empire Day parades, picnics and other town occasions'.[106]

## BRITISH MILITARY MUSIC

The association of music with fighting forces is an ancient one. Music has long been used on marches to keep soldiers in step; to lead into battle and to generally raise spirits and improve morale. Probably the start of the European military music tradition which was in vogue during the time of the slave trade, was when the Crusaders brought back ideas from their travels, such as the Saracens' side drum and kettledrum, which were unknown in European military music at that time.[107]

Subsequent influences came from the Janissaries, the soldiers of the Turkish Empire, whose bands employed oboes, fifes, kettledrums, bass drums and other drums, cymbals and triangles. The drums the Crusaders brought back were the 'naker' and 'tabor'. These were double-headed drums with animal skin heads, rope tensioned and played held to one side, beaten with a wooden stick, undoubtedly the precursor to the side or snare drum.

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[106] John Collins, *Musicmakers of West Africa* (Washington: Three Continents Press, 1985), pp. 1-2.
[107] Henry G. Farmer, *The Rise and Development of Military Music* (London: Reeves, 1912), p. 13.

The kettledrum copied originally from the Saracens was a cumbersome instrument for military use. In some instances it was mounted on a carriage, in others it was carried on the back of one man whilst another beat upon it. The most favoured way was to mount a pair of kettledrums on the back of a large, impressive horse – a method that can still be seen in some British regiments; according to Barty-King a privilege reserved for elite regiments such as the Life Guards since 1660.[108]

The bass drum used initially by the military was considerably larger than its modern-day counterpart. The side drums, or snare drums, varied in size until the early part of the nineteenth century by when they were standardised. Initially they had been made from wood but at this time metal drums were introduced, which refined the sound, making it clearer.

Military music played by drums and fifes was spread around Europe by Swiss mercenaries during the fifteenth century. The fife gained popularity in the military because it could play a tune unlike the drum. There were occasions when a drumbeat could be misheard resulting in incorrect actions being carried out. Murray says that with the fife 'tunes came to be associated with certain beatings and certain events, and in time the tunes came to be known by the event or function the drum beating was meant to notify'.[109]

During the late seventeenth century the fife lost favour as a military instrument. Some thought it detracted from the precision of the drum beat and that soldiers should only march to the side drum, not the shrill sound of the fife. The incorporation of the oboe into regimental music from the late 1670s is another

[108] Hugh Barty-King, *The Drum* (London: The Royal Tournament, 1988), p. 38.
[109] David J. S. Murray, *Music of the Scottish Regiments* (Durham: The Pentland Press, 1994), p. 10.

possible reason for the fife's demise, the oboe having a strident tone, which makes it clearly heard.

Either way, for British regiments in the first half of the eighteenth century, the side drum remained as the only method of signalling in camp, in the field, and on parade. The fife however did not fall into complete disuse as the soldiers would play it for their own entertainment when not on duty. When British regiments were posted overseas one thing that would remind them of home was music and it seems certain that recreational music played a large part in barrack life. After postings in Europe where the fife was still in military usage it gradually regained favour and was re-established in military music by the mid-eighteenth century and corps of drums with fifes still exist today.

As in West African music, the drum in the military was used to say something specific – to give orders. To ensure no mistakes could be made, every beat had to be distinctive so that every soldier was clear what the order was and 'the drummer must not be tempted to show off, to add frills of his own, to demonstrate his virtuosity', otherwise the message may have become altered or misunderstood.[110] During the nineteenth century the drum as used for signalling was gradually coming under scrutiny and by the middle of the century had been replaced by the bugle, which could be heard more clearly and could sound more than one pitch. Drums and fifes were retained however and played an important role when the regiment were on the move.

[110] Barty-King, *The Drum*, p. 15.

## The Influence of Military Music in Barbados

During slavery, bands existed on plantations using whatever instruments the slaves were allowed. It is likely this could have been when the slaves started playing military style rhythms, firstly to disguise their music in an apparently European style, and secondly, to mimic the colonisers. Mimicry does not involve a straightforward copying of an activity, but rather a variation on it. Indeed, Bhabha says that 'in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference'.[111] So whilst the slaves set out to imitate one of the colonists' customs, they were seeking to develop something that was visibly and aurally different. Over time the military rhythms they adopted would have become truly integrated into their music and thus formed a standard part of the slaves' musical repertoire.

Although today the tuk band does not adhere to military musical traditions, there are some retentions. The key one is probably the use of the large bass drum as would be used in a marching band. A larger drum creates more sound, which is advantageous for a music that is played outdoors. The use of the triangle is another military retention, as well as a parallel with African music. A drum major's manual published in the early years of the twentieth century states that 'the triangle is essential to a corps of drums and flutes', thus indicating that this was a well-established ensemble by that time.[112] Military bands in Barbados, as in Europe, fulfilled ceremonial and public duties, a role still carried on today by the Zouave Band of the Barbados Defence Force. Performances by tuk bands at official functions and on public holidays could be considered to be a tradition developed in place of military bands at such events. A possible reinterpretation of

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[111] *The Location of Culture*, p. 86.
[112] J. Winter, *Drum-Major's Manual* (London: Henry Potter, n.d.), p. 21.

military bands is that of the tuk band's performance with the Landship, which will be fully discussed in Chapter 3, pp. 240-3.

Military bands played an important role in certain echelons of Barbadian society. John Amphlett noted in the late nineteenth century that the Garrison Band played at the Savannah every Monday from 5 to 7 p.m. and that it was 'the correct thing for the *elite* of Bridgetown and its neighbourhood to go and hear it'.[113]

It is easy to find the musical legacy of European colonisers in former colonies. Fife and drum bands appear in many places, each seeming to owe their existence to the influence of the military bands of their country's colonisers. As well as other Caribbean countries, parts of America such as New England, and the states of Mississippi and Georgia, have fife and drum music, and I am told that countries further afield such as Madagascar and Uruguay do also.[114] This phenomenon will be discussed fully later in this chapter, pp. 169-79.

What could have been the vehicle for the assimilation of fife and drum music into the African slaves' lives was the militia. As has been discussed in Chapter 1, pp. 53-5, the militia was made up of a mixture of men including slaves. It was a force of part-time reserves who defended the island, particularly in the days before a permanent garrison was established on the island. Some militia duties seem to parallel what might be expected of regular army regiments such as performing ceremonial duties, and going on parade.[115]

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[113] *Under a Tropical Sky: A Journal of First Impressions of the West Indies* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Low & Searle, 1873), pp. 13-4.
[114] Madagascar reference from personal correspondence with Ciro de Rosa, 15 September 2000. Uruguay reference from conversation with Kevin Farmer, 14 February 2001.
[115] P. F. Campbell, 'The Barbados Militia 1627-1815' in *George Washington's Visit to Barbados 1751* ed. by Richard B. Goddard (St Michael, Barbados: Cole's Printery, 1997), pp. 175-92 (p. 184).

Landowners were required to send men to the militia and it is interesting to note that if a black musician was sent he counted for as many, if not more, white men. From muster rolls in the mid-eighteenth century, Richard Hall notes that 'the Drummers and Trumpeters (about 100 and all of them Negroes) are included and set down as so many white men.' The method of calculating numbers was not however straightforward. One clause in the Militia Act said that six tenants and a black drummer were to be counted as ten men, and two horsemen and a trumpeter as four.[116]

When slaves were first used in the militia as musicians is not clear. However the presence of slaves in the militia from the mid-seventeenth century indicates the possibility that they were exposed to military style music much earlier than the establishment of a British garrison on the island. An early reference to slave involvement in such music is cited by Jerome Handler; an advertisement placed in the *Barbados Gazette* in 1735 referring to 'a young Barbadian Negro-man' who was a 'trumpeter in the Life-Guard'.[117] Two such black trumpeters are shown in an anonymous painting, *View of Bridge Town and Carlisle Bay in Barbados with the Governor going to church and attended by his guards*, believed to date from 1742.[118]

Perhaps the militia bands in Barbados, as elsewhere, brought music into the lives of people who heard little other music. In Britain, Colley says that when 'recruiting parties brought their wind instruments, drums and cymbals into small villages, the

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[116] Richard Hall, 'A General Account of the First Settlement and of the Trade and Constitution of the Island of Barbados' in *George Washington's Visit to Barbados 1751*, ibid., pp. 44-92 (pp. 68-9).
[117] Jerome S. Handler, 'Freedmen and Slaves in the Barbados Militia' in *Journal of Caribbean History*, 19 (1984), 1-25, (p. 13).
[118] [P. F. Campbell], *Paintings and Prints of Barbados in the Barbados Museum* (Bridgetown: The Barbados Museum and Historical Society, 1981), pp. 7-9.

effect was immediate and powerful'. Whilst I am not suggesting the militia went around Barbados recruiting in such a way, it is possible the sound of their music provided a complete contrast to what little other music was heard at the time and 'the powerful seduction exerted by martial music' may well have inspired those who heard it.[119]

In 1748 Robert Poole wrote 'one of the companies of militia was reviewed by the Governor, the Drum-Major is a black, and all the drummers under him are of that colour'.[120] Presumably the drummers were given some sort of training and given that the beating of drums in an African style was not allowable, I assume that the drumming was of a style with which the Europeans were familiar, and as they were trying to emulate the regular army, undoubtedly with a military flavour to it.

As in the military, the drum was a key instrument and was used as a signal – to summon parades or to sound an alarm, thus precision beating was essential to ensure the correct message was sent. This could have been the foundation of tuk – the beat of a drum.[121]

Elsewhere in the colonies slaves were gradually recruited into the militia. In New England for example when slaves were allowed to join they could do so as drummers, fifers or trumpeters. Southern notes that all slaves in New England and the Middle Colonies were required to undergo military training up until the 1650s, therefore they may well have acquired fife and drum playing skills then.[122] During the American Revolution (1775-83) many black men served in the military,

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[119] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (London: Vintage, 1996), p. 325.
[120] Poole, 'The Beneficent Bee or Traveller's Companion', p. 237.
[121] See pp. 87-8 for a full discussion of the origin of the name tuk.
[122] Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1971), pp. 42-3.

most of those from Virginia served as drummers or fifers as required by the 1776 Virginia Act.[123] Black fifers and drummers seem to have been fairly common. Evans surmises that, prior to the American Civil War (1861-5):

> black fife and drum bands were modelled on and did not differ considerably from their white counterparts. Through the time of the Civil War such bands were a part of almost every militia unit. Their repertoire consisted mainly of marches and the popular tunes of the day.[124]

This is an interesting parallel with the tuk band and I believe it is possible the origins of the tuk band developed from slave musicians in the militia.

## CELTIC LINKS

The presence of a Celtic population of Scots and Irish early in Barbados' history is likely to have had some influence on the lives of the African slaves they came into contact with. Many of the Celts were indentured servants with skills that were needed on the plantations; others were criminals and vagrants shipped to the colonies. Nowhere is it documented what activities these people brought to Barbados, or what customs and traditions they continued. It seems highly likely however that particularly those who went of their own free will as indentured servants would have taken with them their musical instruments and carried on their traditions. These were the members of the white population that the early slaves had most contact with on the plantations, and sometimes off them, as noted in 1655 when it was reported that there were 'several Irish servants and Negroes out in Rebellion in ye thickets and thereabouts'.[125] Therefore the possibility of

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[123] Ashenafi Kebede, *Roots of Black Music* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1982), p. 147.
[124] David Evans, 'Black Fife and Drum Music in Mississippi', *Mississippi Folklore Register*, 6 (1972), 94-107 (pp. 96-7).
[125] 'Documents relating to the Irish in the West Indies', in *Analecta Hibernica*, ed. by Aubrey Gwyn, (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1932), IV, 139-286 (pp. 233-4).

some transfer of Celtic musical traditions to the black population cannot be precluded.

The derivation of the name of tuk from the Scottish language is discussed earlier in this chapter, pp. 87-8. The long-standing tradition of flute and drum bands, formed of bass drum, one or two side drums, flutes (fifes) and a triangle, which still exists in parts of Scotland today, indicates that there may be some Scottish connection in tuk.[126]

## FOLK CHARACTERS

The tuk band is often associated with some folk characters – Mother Sally, the Tiltman, the Donkeyman and Shaggy Bear. Throughout the Caribbean masquerade is common and takes a variety of forms, though some similar characters can be found.[127]

The Donkeyman has direct connection to the plantation where donkeys were used to haul the carts laden with sugar cane. Fraser et al. state that this character's origins were in fact in Africa and this costume was adopted locally to 'symbolize the importance of the donkey in the sugar cane crop'.[128] I have seen one suggestion that the character is possibly derived from the jostling games of the Ashanti.[129] The Donkeyman was sometimes two men dressed up to look like a donkey who would dance to the band's music. Alternatively the Donkeyman was

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[126] Ian Russell, 'Taking a Standing Beat: Musical Experience and Cultural Identity in the Flute Band Traditions of North-East Scotland'. Paper presented at The British Forum for Ethnomusicology Annual Conference, 11 April 2002.
[127] For examples of these see John W. Nunley and Judith Bettelheim, *Caribbean Festival Arts* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988).
[128] *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage*, p. 59.
[129] Donkeyman display notes at The Heritage Museum, Foursquare, Barbados.

one man dressed up as a donkey who would play his own music. The Donkeyman is not common today.

Shaggy Bear is a character that performs acrobatic feats and cavorts to the music of the tuk band.

Photograph 2: Two shaggy bears[130]

Shaggy Bear is believed to be of African origin, but the name cannot be African bearing in mind the fact that bears do not live in Africa. I am however informed that Senegambia has a yam festival in which the same character is found.[131] Early costumes may have been made of vines, leaves and other plant material and a mask was worn to conceal his features, which contributed to the frightening appearance of this character. Later costumes were made of sacking to which were attached numerous pieces of plant fibres or material and red bows. Small children were often frightened of the Shaggy Bear as he would rush up to them

[130] Photograph taken by John Meredith at The Hilton Hotel Dinner Show, Barbados, 4 August 1998.
[131] Interview with Karl Watson, Barbadian historian, 3 December 1997.

and scare them. One Barbadian recalls when he was six or seven years old that he would be terrified when he heard the bear was coming.[132]

The 'tiltman' is a stilt walker who, depending on his proficiency, performs various feats on his stilts. The term 'tiltman' is unique to Barbados although stilt men, or moco jumbies (or moko jumbies) as they are often known, are found elsewhere in the Caribbean.



Photographs 3, 4, and 5: Barbadian tiltmen[133]

Moco jumbies are often associated with fife and drum music, and with masquerade. They are found in the Caribbean region in places such as Guyana, Trinidad, St Kitts and the U.S. Virgin Islands.[134]

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[132] Interview with Emile Straker, leader of Barbadian group, The Merrymen, 5 August 1998.
[133] Photographs taken by John Meredith at Holetown Festival Street Parade, 13 February 1999; Rockley Resort Cultural Show, 1 December 1997; Tuk Band Competition, Crop Over Festival, 1 August 1998.
[134] For examples see, 'Another Typical New Year Scene', *Daily Argosy*, Guyana, 5 January 1936, p. 7. Sketch shows a masked stiltwalker dressed up as a woman. Thanks to John Cowley for bringing these to my attention. John H. Cowley, *Carnival, Canboulay and Calypso: Traditions in the Making* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 149; Frank L. Mills and S. B. Jones-Hendrickson, *Christmas Sports in St Kitts-Nevis: 'Our Neglected Cultural Tradition'*, [n.p., n.pub., n.d.], p. 47; Robert W. Nicholls, 'The Mocko Jumbie of the U.S. Virgin Islands: History and Antecedents', *African Arts* (1999), pp. 49-61 and 94-5.

According to Hill, the moco jumbie 'was originally a cult figure found throughout West Africa'.[135] White and Forde say that 'elongated figures have always been associated with a spiritual quality and presence in Africa'.[136] In 1795 Mungo Park observed a masquerade outfit made from tree bark, which he was told belonged to *'Mumbo Jumbo'.* This character was apparently used to settle disputes between the wives of a man.[137] *Mumbo Jumbo* was not a stilt walker, but the use of costume and the name seem to bear some connection with the moco jumbie of the Caribbean. The word *moco* is a Congo word for a doctor and Nicholls suggests it may also be Nigerian.[138] Or it may simply be from the word 'mock', reflecting the mimicry taking place. A jumbie is a spirit or ghost, also possibly derived from a Congo word.[139] This association might explain the tiltman's ability to scare – I have seen small children run away from, or burst into tears at the sight of a tiltman. Traditionally tiltmen wore masks but this has died out today. At one time in Barbados tiltmen wore clothes modelled on those of the upper-class gentleman, but today various costumes are used. In Barbados it is not uncommon to see troupes of tiltmen, though in the past there would normally have been only one, or maybe two.

Mother Sally is a man dressed up as a woman with a padded bosom and behind, supposedly to represent the fertility of the African woman. A direct parallel is found in the Gelede masquerade of the Yoruba in South-West Nigeria in which 'female costumes emphasizing buttocks and breasts characterize this masquerade'. Similarly costumed Ga women in Ghana would dance to roving

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[135] Errol Hill, *The Trinidad Carnival*, 2nd edn (London: New Beacon Books, 1997), p. 12.
[136] Ruth White and Heather Forde, *Walking Tall: The Art of Stiltwalking* (Bridgetown: National Cultural Foundation, 1991) unpaginated.
[137] *The Life and Travels of Mungo Park* (Edinburgh: William P Nimmo, 1864) pp. 33-4.
[138] White and Forde, *Walking Tall*; Nicholls, 'The Mocko Jumbie of the U.S. Virgin Islands, p. 49.
[139] Nicholls, ibid., p. 51.

bands in a manner similar to that of the Mother Sally accompanying the tuk band.[140] The Mother Sally wears clothes to exaggerate her 'woman-ness' and today uses make-up and wigs to complete the picture. Men dressing up as women can also be found in the English tradition of Morris dancing. Several characters have been associated with Morris troupes, including that of Maid Marian, who was usually a man.[141] Davis suggests inversions and reversals in canirvals and festivals are likely to be found in the history of early modern Europe. She suggests that the Maid can be interpreted as a biological or agricultural fertility rite, and says that 'the Maid's gestures or costumes might be licentious'.[142] Such an interpretation could be applied to the Mother Sally character.

Photographs 6 and 7 show the padding of the costume.[143]

[140] Edwina Ashie-Nikoi, 'Cohobblopot: Africanisms in Barbadian Culture through the Lens of Crop-Over', *Journal of Caribbean History*, 32 (1998), 82-120 (pp. 87-9).
[141] Arthur Robinson Wright, *British Calendar Customs: England,* ed. by T. E. Jones, 3 vols (London: Glaisher, 1938), II, pp. 88, 229.
[142] Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1975), pp. 130, 138.
[143] Photographs taken by John Meredith at The Hilton Hotel Dinner Show, 4 August 1998 and The Harbour Master Pre-Cruise Entertainment, 22 April 2001.

Photograph 8 shows the Mother Sally doubling up as the steel player of the tuk band.[144]

It is not clear whether these folk characters formed part of slave entertainment. Certainly of the contemporary writers, none mention such characters. It seems unlikely however that these would have gone unnoticed, or the fact that masquerade was taking place, especially considering it was something the writers could have paralleled with English culture for the 'carnivalesque was central to early modern English culture'.[145] Yet, considering that the origins of these characters are believed to be African, the possibility of their use, or some elements of them, in slave society, cannot be dismissed.

One gentleman who grew up in Barbados in the 1920s recalls, particularly on Bank holidays, hearing the village tuk band playing, and that a Shaggy Bear, a Mother Sally, and men on stilts were often seen.[146] Another Barbadian who grew up in the 1940s recalls seeing the tiltman controlling the tuk, he said 'they had

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[144] Photograph taken by John Meredith at The Harbour Master Pre-Cruise Entertainment, 27 April 2000.
[145] Barry Reay, *Popular Cultures in England 1550-1750* (London: Longman, 1998), p. 165.
[146] Interview with Owen Griffith, retired Speculator (dealer in livestock), 27 April 2000.

authority just by walking'.[147] Then the tiltman just wore brown, an outfit made from crocus bag, and a mask.[148]

Historically it is not clear which characters, if any, regularly travelled around with the tuk band. It is possible that the Donkeyman was more associated with the plantation and its festivals, though one lady, born in 1915, said that the donkey was always with the band.[149] The tiltman seems to have been the character most frequently found with the tuk band, perhaps firmly placed in people's memories because of their childhood fear of this larger-than-life character.

## PART 2

# TUK MUSIC

### Instruments

The kittle drum is a snare drum and why it is called a kittle (or kettle) drum is unclear. Despite its name, the kittle does not resemble a traditional kettledrum and serves a different musical purpose. *Chambers Scots Dictionary* gives one definition of kittle as meaning 'to strike up a tune on an instrument'.[150] Whilst the kittle is not a tuned instrument and it cannot therefore play a tune (a melodic succession of notes), the kittle could be said to strike up a rhythm. It is possible therefore that this is simply a further adaptation of a Scottish word. The name kittle is however also used elsewhere in the Caribbean and is defined by Allsopp

[147] Interview with Vern Best, Drummer, 2 May 2000.
[148] Crocus bag is the name used in Barbados for the burlap sacks used to bag produce such as sugar and potatoes. Fraser et al., *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage*, p. 53.
[149] Interview with Jeneth Novelle, retired, 18 February 2001.
[150] *Chambers Scots Dictionary*, ed. by Warrack, p. 310.

as either a European snare drum or as 'a small goat-skin drum played with two sticks to give a syncopated rhythm'.[151]

In the mid-eighteenth century Jean Barbot drew illustrations of musical instruments found on the Gold Coast of Africa. One of these is labelled a 'brass kettle' and whilst it does not resemble the kittle drum of the tuk band, it is shown with two drumsticks.[152] Whether the name 'kettle' is purely coincidental is not determinable, but it is worthy of note. It is seemingly modelled on the military style snare drum and is carried and played in a similar way. The drum in Photograph 9 below from approximately the turn of the twentieth century may have been a discarded military drum – it appears to be emblazoned (decorated with a regimental badge). If it is not actually a military drum, then it has been decorated to look like one.

Photograph 9[153]

[151] *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage*, ed. by Allsopp, p. 328.
[152] Thomas Astley, 'A Description of Guinea, including the Geography with the Natural and Civil History', *A New General Collection of Voyages and Travels*, ed. by Thomas Astley, 2 vols (London: the editor, 1745) II, 520-732 (p. 654).
[153] Section from photograph provided courtesy of Lennox Honychurch.

During the twentieth century there were instances of there being two kittle drums in the tuk band. This is remembered by two Barbadians who grew up in the 1940s.[154] I am told that one drum was called the vamper and the other the cutter. The vamper seems to have kept to a fairly standard rhythmic pattern, whilst the cutter played the lead and added the embellishments. Other oral sources of information have not recalled seeing two kittles in tuk bands, which may be because it is not as common as it once was. The only evidence I have seen of the use of two kittles is a photograph of the winning tuk band in the 1988 tuk band competition.[155]

I have often noticed kittle drummers using their drumsticks upside down. I asked one player about this and he was surprised that there was a 'right' way round to hold them.[156] Another player told me it was to create more sound, particularly when playing outdoors.[157]

The bass drum, sometimes known as the bum drum, is played very much the same as a military bass drum, carried in front of the player. It is however played with only one beater, the other hand being used to dampen the sound when appropriate. Military bass drummers would normally use two beaters, though may occasionally dampen with one hand. During the time of slavery drums would have been made from whatever materials were available to the slaves and it is possible they fashioned drums in the military style because they were allowed to keep

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[154] Interview with Vern Best, 2 May 2000.
Interview with Gerald Hunte, 'Seaman', Tuk band leader, 26 April 2000.
[155] *New Bajan Magazine*, September 1988, p. 18.
[156] Discussed during tuk drumming lesson with David Headley, 7 August 1998.
[157] Discussed during tuk drumming lesson with Wayne 'Poonka' Willock, 18 February 1999.

European style instruments. It is also possible they purposely copied them as part of their mimicry of the Europeans.

Drums used for tuk fall into two categories of manufacture. One is the Barbadian hand-made type; the other is the imported, mass-produced type. Barbadian drums are made from indigenous materials and most are currently made by Aubrey Gittens, who makes the drums in a workshop at the rear of his house (he also plays kittle). The drums are made from plywood, and goat or sheep skin, which he seasons before use, and are rope-tensioned in the military style. The snares for the kittle drum are made from gut.

Photograph 10: Aubrey Gittens showing a drum skin stretched over a tamarind rod rim[158]

[158] Photograph taken by Sharon Meredith in Gittens' workshop at the rear of his home, 19 February 1999.

Photograph 11: Gittens' workshop – note the skin in the bottom left, the coil of tamarind rod on the right of the bench, and some drums.[159]

Today tuk bands tend to use commercially manufactured drums for most performances. This, I am told, is because traditional drums are more sensitive to the weather – if for example it is raining or very humid, the skins (being animal skin) will become damp and will not therefore resonate very well. Manufactured drums have plastic skins, which are unaffected by climate. Also, for those bands who go abroad to perform, they are less concerned about the manufactured drums' ability to withstand the treatment meted out by airlines – they have tough shells made of resin and the skins are rod tensioned.[160] Tuk bands have been

[159] Photograph taken by Sharon Meredith, 19 February 1999.
[160] Interview with Wayne Willock, Tuk band leader, 27 November 1997.

using commercially manufactured drums since the 1970s as evidenced by Photograph 29 of a Landship tuk band, which appears in Chapter 3, p. 244.

The melodic instrument of the tuk band is the penny whistle, though it is actually referred to as the flute. The penny whistle is a well-known instrument in folk music, especially Irish music today. As has been discussed in Chapter 1, p. 40, many Irish people went to Barbados in the early years of settlement and undoubtedly took with them some of their instruments such as flageolets, the precursor of the penny whistle. Flageolets date back well before the arrival of Europeans in the Caribbean and similar instruments are found around the world, probably because such simple, conical bore, unkeyed instruments are fairly easy to make from freely available cane, bamboo or other natural materials such as bone. The penny whistle was invented in 1843 as an inexpensive version of the flageolet.[161]

The violin or fiddle may have been the original melodic instrument of the tuk band and was a welcome instrument in the eyes of the colonists as they were 'well known in European folk and elite traditions [and] the instrument was not thought of as a threat, as drums were'.[162] The use of bowed chordophones was also known in West Africa and the transfer of skills from an African instrument to a European one may have been a fairly easy one.[163]

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[161] *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Stanley Sadie, 29 vols (London: Macmillan Publishers, 2001), VIII, 918.
[162] Rath, 'Drums and Power: Ways of Creolizing Music in Coastal South Carolina and Georgia 1730-90', (p. 113).
[163] John H. Cowley, *Music and Migration: Aspects of Black Music in the British Caribbean, the United States and Britain, before the Independence of Jamaica, and Trinidad & Tobago* (doctoral thesis, University of Warwick, 1992), p. 56.

However the penny whistle has several advantages over the fiddle. It is considerably smaller and therefore easier to transport, not just in someone's pocket, but also on cargo ships. It is also easier to play and is a fairly cheap instrument in comparison to a fiddle. Whilst I have found adverts in Barbadian newspapers for violins, I have found none for penny whistles, but they may not have been advertised simply because the people who read newspapers were not perceived as a potential market for such instruments.

It is not clear if tuk bands ever actually used fifes and, if they did, why a change from fife to penny whistle took place, though I suspect that it would have been due to cost and availability. Fifes are not common instruments and are more expensive to buy than penny whistles. The early tuk bands may have made use of fifes given to them or discarded by military fifers. Switching between the two would have been facilitated by the fact that both have six fingerholes and no keys (traditional fifes were keyless). Maybe when the British garrison was withdrawn in 1905, the supply of fifes disappeared and alternatives had to be found. The name fife and flute are interchangeable to a certain extent – the fife is a small flute, and I have heard ex-military personnel refer to the fifes in a fife and drum band as flutes.[164] This could explain why the penny whistle is known as the flute in tuk.

Playing an end-blown flute was an African musical trait commented on by travellers in Africa such as Mungo Park who in 1796 wrote:

> they play upon a sort of flute; but instead of blowing into a hole in the side, they blow obliquely over the end, which is half shut by a thin piece of wood; they govern the holes on the side with their fingers and play some simple and very plaintive tunes.[165]

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[164] Meeting of The Corps of Drums Society at the National Army Museum, London, 8 May 1999.
[165] *The Life and Travels of Mungo Park*, 1864), p. 92.

On the Gold Coast in the late seventeenth century, Barbot drew flute-type instruments with shaped mouthpieces, which resemble a penny whistle or flageolet.[166] Thomas Astley noted the use of flutes and flageolets on the western coast of Africa in the early eighteenth century, which he described as 'nothing but reeds'.[167]

Edward Bowdich in 1817 commented, 'the flute is made of a long hollow reed, and has no more than three holes'.[168] Undoubtedly the slaves would have been able to substitute bamboo or something similar for such a reed and easily make similar instruments. Papaw grows rather more commonly in Barbados than bamboo and was a free and easily replaceable material to fashion a flute from. I am told that up into the 1960s in Barbados transverse flutes were sometimes made from papaw shanks (the long hollow stalk of the pawpaw leaf).[169] What was played on these flutes is not known, but presumably any tune the player picked up or made up. These were not used in tuk bands, but were for self-entertainment.

One point that is certain is that vertically held instruments were in use roughly by the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and oral evidence from the early twentieth century recalls the use of a vertically held instrument.[170] Photograph 12 below of a tuk band taken circa 1900 clearly shows the use of a vertically held instrument.[171]

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[166] Astley, 'A Description of Guinea, including the Geography with the Natural and Civil History', *A New General Collection of Voyages and Travels,* II, 520-732 (p. 654), Plate 69.
[167] 'Voyages and Travels along the Western Coast of Africa, from Cape Blanco to Sierra Leona', *A New General Collection of Voyages and Travels*, II, 158-373 (p. 278).
[168] T. Edward Bowdich, *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee* (London: John Murray, 1819), p. 361.
[169] Conversation with John Gilmore, 22 March 2001.
[170] Interview with Owen Griffith, 27 April 2000.
[171] I am grateful to Lennox Honychurch for allowing me to obtain a copy of this photograph.

Photograph 12

Below is an enlarged section of Photograph 12 showing the band, which makes it a little easier to see the formation – very much as it is seen today.

Photograph 13

The triangle, usually referred to as 'the steel' is exactly what it is called – a percussive triangular piece of metal. It is used to mark the pulse in the music, to subdivide the beat or to add extra rhythm. Again, the triangle can be substituted with any piece of percussive metal and I have seen this done, though variations in sound occur depending on the shape and type of metal used. On one occasion where I have seen a piece of metal used it created a sound reminiscent of a ship's bell (this can be heard on Track 1 of the accompanying CD), which was quite appropriate as the tuk band was playing with the Landship, which will be discussed in Chapter 3, pp. 240-3. The use of metal percussion is important in West African music to mark the pulse and its use has spread to many musical cultures developed from West African music.

Barbot noted in Guinea that when drumming 'they set a boy to rattle on a hollow piece of iron with a stick'.[172] This could explain why a 'steel' is used in tuk bands – an African stylistic and musical retention. Though the role of the iron is not mentioned, it is likely that it was used to mark time and emphasise certain beats, similar to the role of the steel in the tuk band.

## Tuk Rhythms and Melody

As with historical accounts, music was scarcely, if ever, written down. Tuk music was traditionally, and still is, a musical form passed on in the oral tradition. Thus although there are standard rhythms for tuk, each player has his own particular way of playing them and passes that on to people he teaches. For example, when I was learning tuk drumming with different players, I was taught basically the same rhythms, but with subtle differences in the phrasing and embellishment. There is

[172] Jean Barbot, *A Description of the Coasts of North and South* Guinea, in *A Collection of Voyages and Travels*, ed. by John Churchill, 8 vols (London: Thomas Osborn,1752) V, 15-455 (p. 264).

nothing unusual in two players having variations in style. I would expect to find such variation in any type of music. No two musicians will play the same piece in exactly the same way no matter how precisely it is written down with phrasing marks, ornamentation and tempo directions.

Tuk shares certain traits with European military music. The first is the instruments used. As I have shown above, pp. 139-48, the instruments used by modern tuk bands are of European derivation, although there are parallels that can be drawn with African instruments. The second is the use of three speeds of music in 2/4, 3/4 and 4/4, which can be paralleled with the military marching band who use these speeds for marching. The 3/4 speed is used for slow retreat marches.

The first of the three speeds is the march or 'fassie' in 2/4 time, performed at between M.M. ♩=112-120, the name march indicating the speed and purpose of this. The next is the waltz in 3/4 time, performed at between M.M. ♩=132-152. The fastest speed is known as 'tuk' and although written as a 4/4 rhythm it is actually performed at double speed, as if it were a 2/4, making it extremely fast, performed at between M.M. ♩=132-160.

The basic tuk rhythms are shown below. I am using Western style notation for transcriptions because the rhythmic patterns follow this type of notation and indeed the tuk musicians themselves refer to the rhythms as 2/4, 3/4 and 4/4 and count and teach in this way. Each has a basic eight-bar pattern. These rhythms are individually fairly simple and repetitive, though the phrasing makes them more complex and this will be discussed after each rhythm.

In the kittle drum patterns the beats on the line are played in the centre of the drum, those above the line are played at the edge of the drum, near the rim. This gives variation in the sound produced. The majority of beats are played in the centre of the skin, which gives a fuller sound as the skin vibrates more. Beats played at the edge of the drum are shorter and with a less full sound as the skin is not able to vibrate as much. Occasionally the player may tap the metal rim of the drum to give a further contrasting sound.

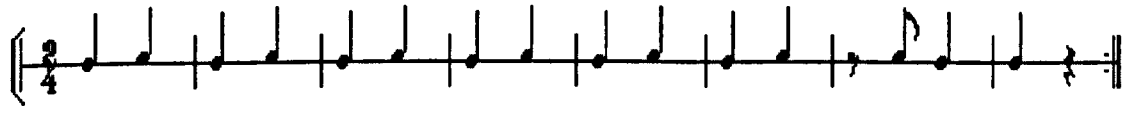
Compared to the kittle's higher, crisper sound, the bass drum gives a deep booming sound that is created by the size of the drum, which resonates a great deal. This means that if a short sound is required, the drum has to be stopped with the beater-free hand, i.e. the skin has to be prevented from further vibration, which is normally done by placing the flat of the hand quickly on the skin and the sound stops immediately. In the bass drum patterns the beats on the line are played with the beater. Beats above the line are played with the beater-free hand directly on the other skin of the drum.

Figure 4: 2/4 March or 'Fassie' tempo - Kittle drum

In the rhythm shown in Figure 4, except in bars 7 and 8, the first two quavers are played in the centre of the drum, giving more emphasis to the first beat in each bar. The first quaver of the second beat is played at the edge of the drum giving a contrasting sound. Bars 7 and 8 act as a closing statement to the phrase with the emphasis placed on the second half of the first beat of bar 7 creating syncopation.

The rest on the second beat of bar 8 acts as a break before the phrase is repeated.

Figure 5: 2/4 March or 'Fassie' tempo - Bass drum

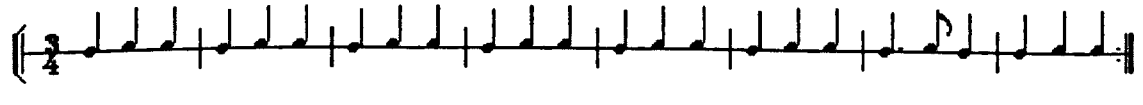


In Figure 5 the bass provides the pulse of the music with the emphasis on the first beat of the bar, except in bar 7. The first beat is played with the beater creating a louder, more resonant sound than the second beat, which is played with the beater-free hand. The syncopation in bar 7 is the same as in the kittle and reinforces that.

Figure 6: 3/4 Waltz - Kittle drum

In Figure 6, as in the fassie, the first two quavers in each bar (except for bar 7) are played in the centre of the drum, giving more emphasis on the first beat of the bar. The first quaver of the second and third beats is played at the edge of the drum giving a contrast in sound. The whole of the changed rhythm in bar 7 is played in the centre of the drum, which gives it extra emphasis, as well as signalling that the phrase is coming to an end.

Figure 7: 3/4 Waltz - Bass drum



In Figure 7, the use of the beater for the first beat in each bar in this rhythm means there is more emphasis on that beat. The second and third beats in all but the seventh bar are played with the beater-free hand, effectively taps on the drum skin, and are therefore much lighter sounds. This emphasis on the first beat helps to regulate the time keeping. The different rhythm in bar 7 is the same as that in the kittle and, as in the fassie, reinforces this.

Figure 8: 4/4 Tuk tempo played at double speed - Kittle drum

> indicates accented beats

Figure 8 is basically a two-bar pattern that is repeated. The continuous quaver rhythm itself is not complex, but how it is phrased does make it complicated. In bars 1, 3, 5 and 7, the seventh quaver is played at the edge of the drum giving a contrasting sound to the others, which are played in the centre of the drum. Accents are placed on the first and fourth quavers in these bars. The accent on the first is not surprising. However when I learned, I found the accent on the fourth quaver unusual. In Western music I am used to placing more emphasis on the first and maybe the third beat in a bar. Placing an accent on the second half of the second beat of a bar I found unusual and difficult to grasp.

In bars 2, 4, 6 and 8, the third and seventh quavers are played at the edge of the drum thus creating a different sound on the second and fourth beats of those bars. The accented notes in these bars are the fourth and fifth quavers, which again I found unusual as this is effectively accenting a weak half beat then a strong beat.

Figure 9: 4/4 Tuk tempo played at double speed - Bass drum

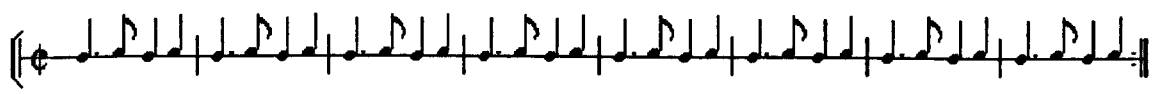


Figure 9 shows the only bass rhythm where the drum is not simply playing the pulse for most of the phrase. The dotted crotchet and quaver rhythm in the first half of each bar creates a bouncy sound with the emphasis on the first note, which is played with the beater. This is followed by the lighter and shorter quaver played by the beater-free hand. The third beat is played with the beater, which places more emphasis on this beat than the fourth, which is again played with the beater-free hand.

Variations on these rhythms, notably the kittle rhythms, add interest to the music and stamp the individuality of the drummer on the music. One variation is to change one bar's rhythm, usually the penultimate bar of the eight-bar pattern. Another is to subdivide beats – one of the most common ways to do this is to play sections of music in semiquavers rather than quavers. Sometimes an introduction is added, which is rhythmically complex compared to the basic pattern that starts when the flute starts playing.

One interesting variation I have encountered in the fassie has been one kittle player's use of both sticks to play the last two bars of the pattern. This obviously adds extra impact and volume and helps to emphasise the end of the phrase, and is played more forcefully for the last time in the performance. Sometimes it is possible to see the interplay between the flute and kittle drummer where the flute player gives 'breaks' for the kittle drummer to improvise.

The kittle drummer is at liberty to be as demonstrative as he chooses, embellishing the basic rhythms to display his virtuosity and add variety to the music. This is probably where the line can be drawn when saying tuk sounds like military music. Both are executed with precision but the tuk drummer is allowed more freedom than the drummer in the military marching band.

The bass drum does not generally improvise because it has an important role to fulfil in maintaining a steady pulse, and too much ornamentation would disguise this. The size and manner in which the drum is played also preclude much ornamentation. I have heard slight variations, notably in the penultimate bar of the eight bar pattern, or some subdivisions of beats in slower pieces. I have also seen one bass player never play anything except the standard rhythms.

The steel usually plays the pulse, reinforcing the bass drum, and can also add extra rhythm when desired. Because it is a metal instrument it can clearly be heard above the other instruments and it must therefore be played accurately to complement and reinforce the rhythmic patterns of the drums.

The real variety in the music comes from the flute player who as well as being the only provider of melodic content, is free to perform as he chooses. The flute player acts as the leader in the tuk band, usually playing a short melodic introduction to the piece before the drummers join in. It is really a display of his ability if he can play a well-known tune and embellish it in such a way that everyone still recognises the tune.

One well-known tuk player, Gerald Hunte, known as Seaman, plays his penny whistle with his right hand at the top of the instrument, contrary to normal practice. This does not affect what is being played, but is unusual as he also plays saxophone and plays this instrument with his left hand at the top.[173] It is notable that he sometimes plays saxophone in the tuk band rather than penny whistle; occasionally swapping between the two instruments in one piece of music. An example of Seaman playing saxophone in tuk is on the accompanying CD, Track 2. I have not come across any records or photographs, or been told of anyone, except Seaman and another member of his band, playing saxophone in tuk. This is one way that tuk has been adapted. Tuk is what suits people at a particular time, and changes such as this inclusion of a different instrument indicate that the tuk tradition is alive for as Blacking says, 'unchanging cultural tradition is dead'.[174]

My observations on this change are firstly, that the saxophone does at times drown the drums, thus masking the complex rhythmic interactions taking place. Secondly, it is unlikely this version of tuk will be more widely adopted. There are fewer saxophone players in Barbados than penny whistle players and, compared to the penny whistle, the saxophone is a more difficult instrument to learn, and is certainly more expensive to buy. Thirdly, the use of the saxophone may lead people to consider the music to be jazz-inspired.

There is something more distinctive about the sound of a penny whistle and drums than that of a saxophone and drums. There are also times when hearing the drum rhythms played more or less straight with the penny whistle, that it is possible

[173] I have not had an opportunity to discuss this point with him as it is not something I picked up on whilst watching him play, but only later when studying video recordings.
[174] *Music, Culture, and Experience: Selected Papers of John Blacking*, ed. by Reginald Byron (London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 156.

(unlike when hearing the saxophone) to imagine this is a military fife and drum band.

Photograph 14: Seaman and his band – Troubadours International[175]

Different people hear different things in tuk, as indeed in any music. Everyone has their own preferences and ideas, which have been shaped by the society they have grown up in. One elderly Barbadian has described tuk as 'sweet sounding' but could not be any more specific.[176] Outsiders compare tuk with what they are already familiar, and I have received a variety of suggestions as to what tuk 'sounds like' from people of different nationalities. One American musician suggested it sounded like a cross between fife and drum (as in the military style corps of drum bands that are popular in the U.S.A.) and New Orleans bands.[177] A French fife and drum researcher tells me that to him tuk 'sometimes sounds like British military drumming but sometimes evokes more rudimental (*sic*) drumming,

[175] Photograph taken by John Meredith at Oistins Fish Festival, 24 April 2000.
[176] Interview with Gwendolyn Grant, 18 February 2001.
[177] Personal correspondence with Charles Terzi, 28 June 1999.

US or French'.[178] A former military musician suggested that tuk sounds 'like carnival music', but not from any particular carnival.[179]

Tourists in Barbados have a range of perceptions. One American told me it was 'great steel drum music' (though she acknowledged they weren't using steel drums). Some British tourists likened it with Northern Irish marching bands, which is not surprising as there are some shared ingredients such as the use of similar instruments. One British couple likened tuk to something they had heard at the Edinburgh Tattoo, which is possible as corps of drums with fifes do play at the Tattoo. Several people made references to hearing something similar in Africa – though the geographic spread of where in Africa they claim to have heard it makes me think they were comparing African drumming styles rather than tuk as a musical style.[180]

**Repertoire**

Today the repertoire of the tuk band is open as basically any music can be played to a tuk beat. Historically the same may have applied, with well-known tunes being played with a tuk beat. If indeed tuk started out as a mimicking of the military bands then undoubtedly some of the music would have been imitated. Also, because of efforts to prevent slaves playing their own music, there would have been an adaptation of their African music to disguise it so it didn't sound too African.

[178] Personal correspondence with Jean-Pierre Maingam, 14 December 2001 and 14 January 2002.
[179] Personal correspondence with Major Richard Powell, 15 August 2001 and 1 September 2001.
[180] Various interviews with tourists – Harbourmaster Cruise and Accra Beach Hotel, 27 April 2000; Rockley Resort, 1 May 2000.

Much of the music played by tuk bands today was composed for much larger instrumental ensembles. The arrangement of the music for a tuk band has to be fairly simple due to the size of the band. The penny whistle, as the only melodic instrument, has to play the tune. The bass drum keeps the band in time by playing the pulse, fulfilling the role of any bass instrument. The steel reinforces this role and occasionally adds some extra rhythm. The kittle adds rhythmic interest. As there is no opportunity for harmony due to the lack of other tuned instruments, the harmony is substituted with extra rhythms.

The diversity of the music played today by tuk bands is illustrated by some of the standard tunes performed: (the first four can be heard on the accompanying CD)

'The Blue Danube', a waltz composed by the Viennese composer Johann Strauss II in 1867 (Track 3 – performed by Ruk-a-Tuk International).[181]

'My Grandfather's Clock', a song composed by the American composer Henry Clay Work in 1875 (Track 4 – performed by Corbin's Tuk Band).[182]

'Scipio', a march composed by George Handel. This was used in his opera also called *Scipio*, which was premiered in 1726. It is also used as the regimental slow march of the Grenadier Guards. It is thought the march was written before the opera, but whether it was written specifically for the Grenadiers is not known (Track 5 – performed by Ruk-a-Tuk International).[183]

'Tuk Band Rhythm', a calypso composed and performed by Wayne 'Poonka' Willock in 1983 (Track 6 – performed by Black Pudding).[184]

The Barbados National Anthem, composed by Irving Burgie and C. van Roland Edwards in 1966.[185]

'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer', the well-known Christmas song, composed by American composer Johnny Marks in 1950.

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[181] Recording made by Sharon Meredith at Tuk Band Competition, 1 August 1998.
[182] Recording, ibid.
[183] Gordon Turner and Alwyn Turner, *Guards and Infantry* (Stapleshurst: Spellmount, 1996), p. 181. *Scipio* is taken from Ruk-a-Tuk International, *Indigenous Tuk Band Music of Barbados* (WIRL, WK335, 1991). Reproduced by kind permission of Ruk-a-Tuk International.
[184] Nancy Rogers Yaeger, 'Poonka: Tuk in the Head', *New Bajan*, (1992), 7-11 (p. 9). Recording made by Sharon Meredith at Tuk Band Competition, 1 August 1998.
[185] Fraser et al., *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage*, p. 120.

Whilst there is no specific tuk repertoire, it is worth noting that the musical ability of a band that can competently play music from such a variety of genres is considerable and that they should be given credit for their ability. The repertoire of a band may include as many as twenty pieces. All music is played from memory and the flute player therefore has a demanding role to remember all the pieces.

As I will show below, tuk was once a social commentary form of music. Therefore the music would have changed with the day-to-day events of life. This explains why there has been no standard repertoire passed down the generations.

## TYPES OF TUK

As I have discussed in this chapter, tuk is an instrumental form of music. There are two other types of tuk that have existed, sung tuk and wooden horse tuk, and I have found evidence of these in texts and in interviews.

### Sung Tuk

Few people recall when tuk music included singing. One documented reference to singing was made by Elombe Mottley in a newspaper article in 1997. He wrote, 'a regular feature about the bumbatuk bands of my childhood is that singing was a major part of the group's performance.' In the late 1960s he found one band, the Benn Hill Sports Band (sports in Barbados referring to music and dance) that still included singing in their repertoire. Apparently 'the flute player sang lead on all the songs' and 'the singing was full of speech rhythms. [...] the rhythms on the drums and triangle were complementary accenting the melody line of both the voice and flute'.[186] This is the most detailed description I have found of singing in tuk. I have

[186] 'Bumbatuk music and calypso', *Daily Nation*, 1 September 1997. Article found in file of Tuk clippings at Barbados Museum Library, page reference not given.

endeavoured for several years to acquire copies of the recordings made by Mr Mottley. Unfortunately he now lives in Jamaica and has failed to respond to my enquiries about these recordings. This is a great pity as if Mr Mottley still has them, they would have added another perspective to this study of tuk.

Another reference I have found to sung tuk is in *Folk Songs of Barbados*. For Landship parades, Christmas, Easter and other holidays:

> tuk bands would travel from village to village, playing popular tunes and inviting persons to contribute their own compositions, however innocent or suggestive in lyrics, simple or intricate in melody, as long as they can be fitted to a lively rhythm.[187]

These two descriptions offer different accounts of the format of sung tuk and it is reasonable to assume that both formats have existed. There could be a simple explanation that the flute player sang in the absence of any of the audience choosing to do so, or perhaps as an incentive to get others singing. Best says that from the 1950s the penny whistle has been used 'with increasing frequency over and above, and instead of the solo cantor'.[188] This confirms Mottley's comments although recollections of singing with tuk bands are vague and generally agree with each other that the music was most important and that singing was rarely heard. It has been suggested that tuk band songs were specific to certain areas of Barbados, which implies that only a small number of people knew them, thus their preservation and perpetuation would be restricted.[189]

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[187] Marshall et al., *Folk Songs of Barbados,* p. 31.
[188] Curwen Best, *'Banja': excavating inter-facing and re-placing African-Caribbean art*, p. 164.
[189] Marshall et al., ibid., p. 31.

My two oral sources of information on this matter grew up in Barbados in the 1920s to 1940s. Sir Clyde Gollop recalls that songs would develop from current affairs and local gossip, very much like calypso, providing the social commentary on life.[190] This could explain why sung tuk has disappeared; it has been superseded by calypso, which fulfils the purpose of social commentary (this will be discussed in Chapter 4, pp. 261-7). Grafton Browne, who grew up in Barbados in the 1930s and 1940s, recalls that people would make up their own lyrics to all kinds of tunes.[191] A more recent incidence of sung tuk has been brought to my attention by John Gilmore. In the mid-1980s he heard the hymn *More Oil in My Lamp* being sung with a tuk band on Baxters Road in Bridgetown, a popular destination on Friday and Saturday nights to drink, socialise and eat fried chicken and fish.[192]

The only tuk songs that have been documented (and these were collected by Peggy McGeary in the 1970s) are songs that are no longer performed.[193] These songs were recorded and subsequently notated for *Folk Songs of Barbados*, and are reproduced here as they appear in the book. Although the book suggests these three songs are a small, sample selection, McGeary assures me that these were the only tuk songs collected.[194] As with the slave songs discussed earlier, pp. 101-7, in the absence of a substantial body of evidence in the shape of more tuk songs to make further comparisons with, it is not possible to say how typical such songs were. Again, I examine these songs with a view to placing them in the social and cultural environment of the time, rather than analysing the music.

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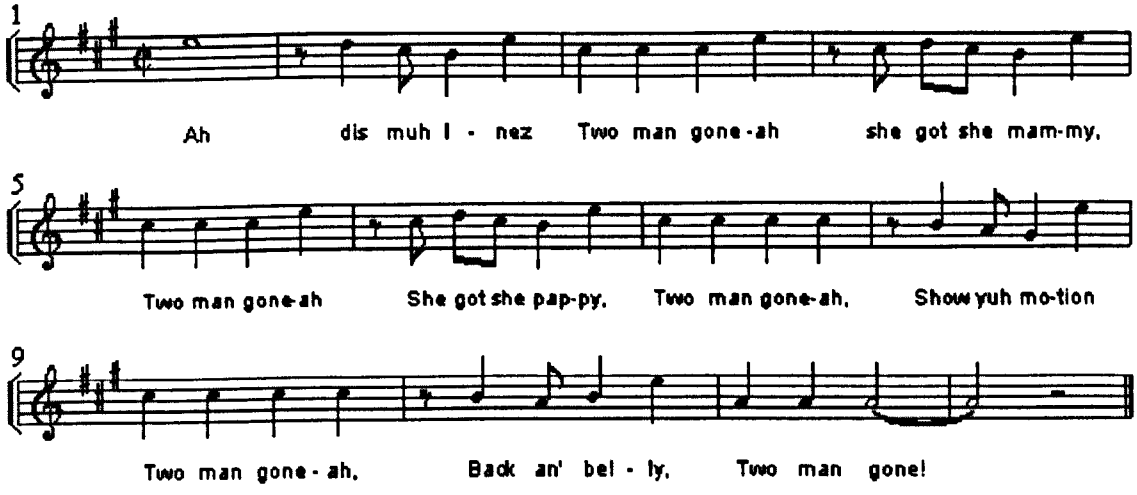
[190] Interview, 2 May 2000.
[191] Interview, 16 August 1999.
[192] Discussion with John Gilmore, 17 November 2000.
[193] Interview with Peggy McGeary, 5 December 1997.
[194] Conversation, 19 February 2001.

The first song, 'Ah dis muh Inez', was apparently popular in the early twentieth century when tuk bands played on Sunday afternoons, and dances such as the Joan and Johnny were performed.[195]

Figure 10: 'Ah dis muh Inez'




The song is made up of two-bar phrases with bars 3 and 4 repeated in bars 5 and 6; and bars 7 and 8 repeated in bars 9 and 10. The melody moves mainly by step but with some leaps at the ends of bars. It is rhythmically straightforward although the quaver rests at the beginning of bars 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 create slight syncopation.

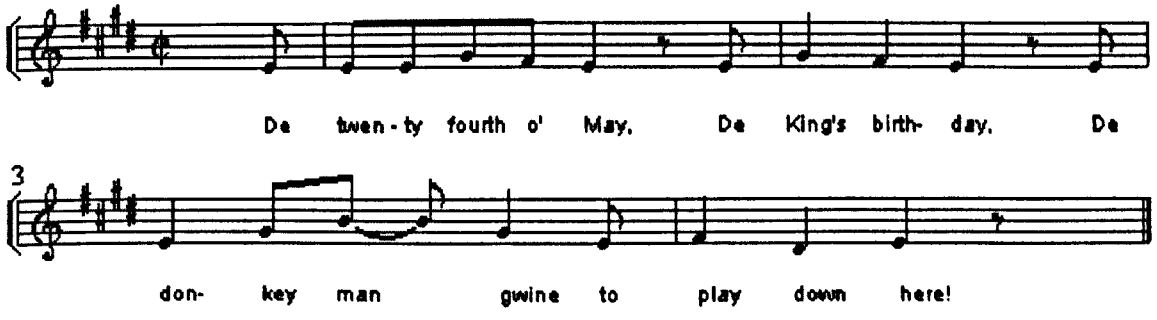
Marshall et al. say that the song 'has no real story or meaning, but appears to be made up of words strung together to fit the rhythm'.[196] The song however appears to be about a woman called Inez. 'Two man gone' may be referring to the fact that she has had two suitors or husbands, but they have now gone. She still, however, has her 'mammy' and 'pappy'. The inclusion of the words 'Back an' belly' must be a reference to the Back and Belly dance, and 'show yuh motion' is perhaps

[195] Marshall et al., *Folk Songs of Barbados*, p. 32.
[196] Ibid., p. 32.

suggesting what Inez needs to do to get another man. These lyrics do not place the song in a particular period of time. The Joan and Johnny, which was discussed earlier, pp. 116-7, is noted to have been danced by slaves in the 1830s and was still in existence in the 1920s, so it is possible the song originated any time during that period. If it were possible to discover more about the Back and Belly, a more accurate dating may be possible. The fact that the Joan and Johnny was originally a slave dance confirms that this was a song about the black population.

The second song, 'De twenty fourth o' May' is specifically about one particular day, which was a public holiday.

Figure 11: 'De twenty fourth o' May'




The song is short and fairly simple. The quaver rhythm in the first half of each phrase creates a bouncy effect, reflecting the lyrics, which are about a happy occasion that people would look forward to. The melody does not have any intervals larger than a third, and moves mainly by its step and its range is restricted to less than one octave.

Although the lyrics suggest the 24 May was the King's birthday, it was actually Queen Victoria's birthday. It has also been known as Victoria Day and as Empire Day.[197] I would suggest that the song was originally about the Queen's birthday and that the lyrics changed after the Queen's death in 1901. This would then date the song to the nineteenth century. This suggests that the music was more important, and the lyrics were adaptable once the original event or meaning of them no longer existed. As it was a public holiday, tuk bands would play as entertainment for all, as suggested by the reference to the donkey man, the folk character frequently associated with tuk bands as discussed earlier, pp. 133-4. I wonder if the reference to the 'Donkey man gwine to play down here' may have been some sort of advertisement of a band's intention to play in a particular place, perhaps as they arrived there.

There are two further verses to this song:

De twenty-fourth o' May
De King's birthday
Bromley band gwine to play down here!

Bromley 'pon de cornet
Sonny 'pon de steel
All de girls goin' to brek de heel!

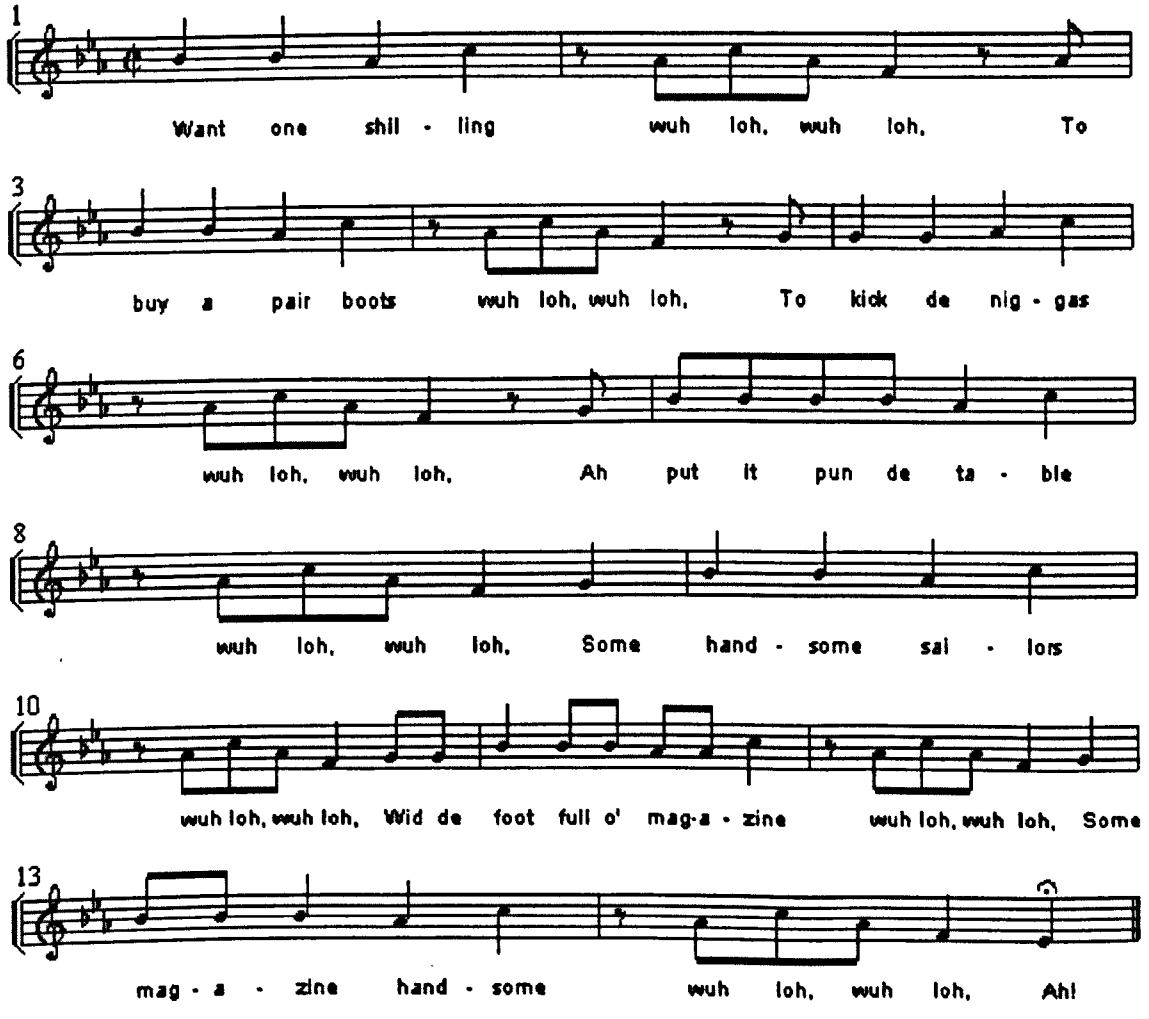
Bromley was a brass band leader and was, according to Marshall et al., well known in Barbados in the 1920s.[198] Another Barbadian historian however says that Bromley died in 1915.[199] The two verses referring to Bromley can then be dated to approximately the first quarter of the twentieth century. The reference to 'Sonny 'pon de steel' suggests that the triangle is generally known as a steel in

[197] The Schedule to the Bank Holidays Act of 1905 lists 24 May as Victoria Day. *Laws of Barbados*, rev. by C. V. H. Archer and W. K. Ferguson, 6 vols (Barbados, 1944-6), II, 577-80. 24 May is listed as Empire Day in *Leverick's Directory of Barbados 1921*, comp. by Percy Sinclair Leverick (Barbados [1921]), p. 209.
[198] *Folk Songs of Barbados*, p. 33.
[199] Warren Alleyne, 'Slave drum, tuk and dance band', *Daily Nation*, 14 January 2002, p. 12.

Barbados, not just in the tuk band. The line 'All de girls goin' to brek de heel!' suggests that Bromley and his band may have been the idols of their day (or aspired to be), and had the girls rushing to get to where the band were playing. If, as I have suggested, the song did originate during Queen Victoria's reign, then these verses would have been either amended or added to suit the particular circumstances.

The third song 'Want One Shilling' is about a woman who needs money to buy a pair of boots and her plan to obtain the money from sailors visiting the island (though how exactly is not suggested).

Figure 12: 'Want one shilling'



The song is rhythmically and melodically fairly simple and is made up of a four-bar phrase that is repeated with some slight variation, for example, in bar 13 the first beat is two quavers instead of the crotchet found in bars 1, 5 and 9. Bars 3, 7 and 11 have the same pitches on the same beats but each bar is rhythmically slightly different. The first three lines are identical rhythmically and melodically except for the last quaver of bar 2, which is an A rather than a G as in bars 4 and 6. The range is confined to less than one octave, and the melody moves by step and by thirds with no larger intervals.

This song is very much a lament about an everyday problem, that of finding enough money to purchase basic requirements such as a pair of boots. 'Wuh loh' is an expression of despair as the woman finds herself in a situation that is less than ideal and which will not have an easy resolution. The line, 'to kick de niggas', might suggest that the woman in question was either a poor white, or a black person who considered herself to have higher social status than, say, plantation workers. 'Put it pun de table' may be the woman telling the sailors to pay in advance for whatever service is being offered, before she changes her mind when she discovers the sailors have feet 'full o' magazine', which is apparently a foot infection.[200] The final line, 'Some magazine handsome' suggests that the woman has to overcome her reluctance to have anything to do with the sailors because her need for money is greater. This song demonstrates the relevance of tuk songs to day-to-day life, very much as folk songs often are. There is nothing in the lyrics to suggest when this song might have originated.

[200] Marshall et al., *Folk Songs of Barbados*, p. 34.

What is noticeable about the first and third songs is that they only have one verse. This may be because there were no more verses or they have simply been forgotten. It could also be because these were the standard verses and thereafter verses were improvised by onlookers on topics relevant to the place and time of performance. Oliver Broomes, better known as the calypsonian Lord Radio, told me that early tuk players only ever learned the chorus of a song, not the verses. He recalls them playing the chorus over and over again.[201] It is possible therefore that the verses were sung unaccompanied and the tuk band played the chorus.

Comparing these three tuk songs does not enable very much to be said generally about the songs performed by tuk bands early in the twentieth century. The first and third songs relate to the everyday life of ordinary people. The first is about relationships, the third about a scheme to get money from people who are better off. The second song is related to the life of ordinary people, but is about a special occasion, a holiday that would have been planned for and looked forward to for some time. Stylistically, all three songs could have been created at different periods in time, and resulted from a range of influences. That could, however, also be said of modern-day tuk repertoire.

**Wooden Horse Tuk**

The other type of tuk that has disappeared is wooden horse, or wood horse tuk. People born in the 1920s-1940s recall it from their childhood, but it was dying out in the 1950s. The only difference I have been able to establish between tuk played today and wooden horse tuk is the name.

[201] Interview, 13 February 2001.

Wooden horse tuk was music played to accompany a merry-go-round, hence the wooden horse name. One interviewee told me that 'the guys played tuk under the merry-go-round and the faster they played the faster it went round'.[202] The most remembered venue for this type of tuk was The Annual Industrial Exhibition held at Queen's Park in Bridgetown each December though newspaper reports on the Exhibition do not mention it.[203] This may be because the show reported on was the larger, main event held a week after the Annual Peasant Agricultural Show.[204] I am told that wooden horses were part of every festival for labouring-type people.[205] Grafton Browne recalls in the 1940s you would find the wooden horses in certain areas on certain nights of the week. By the time he emigrated to the U.K. in 1957 he believes this had died out, attributing its demise to things such as cinemas and television.[206]

I have only found one printed reference to wooden horses, and it is very brief. Referring to Civic Day (1 January) celebrations, Mottley says 'tuk bands were always there playing for the wooden horse (merry-go-round), Maypole, the Landship or masqueraders'.[207] In a 1943 newspaper I found an advert that mentioned a merry-go-round at the New Year Fair to be held in Queen's Park. In 1948, a merry-go-round is mentioned in an article about the Civic Day event to be held on 1 January. However, neither of these mentions any musical accompaniment.[208]

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[202] Interview with Emile Straker, 5 August 1998.
[203] See for example; *Barbados Mercury and Bridgetown Gazette*, 29 December 1888; *Weekly Recorder*, 25 December 1897; *Barbados Standard*, 20 December 1913; *Barbados Globe and Colonial Advocate*, 14 December 1923; *Advocate*, 12 December 1928.
[204] *Advocate*, 'Local Peasant Show', 6 December 1928, p. 8.
[205] Interview with Sir Clyde Gollop, 2 May 2000.
[206] Interview, 16 August 1999.
[207] Elombe Mottley, 'Sweet, sweet Tuk Band music', *Daily Nation*, 4 January 1999. Cutting found in Tuk file at Barbados Museum library, page reference not given.
[208] *Barbados Advocate*, 29 December 1943, p. 4; 1 January 1948, p. 7.

## Tuk-Type Musics In The Caribbean and The United States of America

As well as migration, the shared history of much of the Caribbean region makes the fact that tuk-type musics are widespread unsurprising. However the diversity of the region has meant that whilst there are similar musics, each has its own unique attributes that set it apart from the others. The musics that are geographically closer might bear more resemblance than those that are geographically distant, but substantial further research would be necessary to be able prove this.

What has actually happened to each Caribbean music as a result of migration is beyond the scope of this thesis. However what has happened to tuk and related musics is important here. The question is whether tuk actually evolved in Barbados, or whether it arrived there as a musical form from elsewhere. Best suggests that 'the tuk band (by name) and its rhythm are [...] for all intents and purposes, native and indigenous to Barbados'.[209] However, the incidence of musics similar to tuk precludes tuk from being unique other than in name. There are too many parallels with other similar musics for it not to be related to them in some way. If it was imported to Barbados then the question is when and where from? Lack of documentation mentioning tuk leads me to believe that tuk is a fairly recent phenomenon, having evolved or arrived in Barbados as recently as the second half of the nineteenth century. However, due to the wide variety of movement that took place in and out of Barbados around that time it would be virtually impossible to pinpoint one particular source.

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[209] *'Banja': excavating inter-facing and re-placing African-Caribbean art*, p.165.

Was tuk the original fusion fife and drum music that was eventually carried around the region? It seems unlikely that there was one music from which the others have developed. Undoubtedly some musics are the direct result of migration such as the fife and drum ensembles of the Dominican Republic taken there by emigrants from St Kitts and Nevis.[210] The fife and drum bands depicted in sketches in a newspaper from British Guiana may portray a tuk band transplanted by migrant workers.[211] On geographically close islands it is hard not to imagine some connection between similar musics. However, the incidence of fife and drum musics across an area reaching from the southern states of the United States into Brazil and possibly further, may point to a more fundamental explanation – the incidence of flute and drum ensembles in West Africa meant that the slaves were already familiar with such a grouping of instruments before they encountered the European military fife and drum bands in the New World.[212] The resulting tuk and similar musics may then simply be an example of the creolization process.

I have not undertaken an exhaustive search, but I have discovered a number of tuk-type musics in the region and am certain that if I were to look further and in more depth, I would find more. This overview of tuk-type musics seeks to show the existence of such musics and some of the common influences on them. I am also aware of some others that have existed, such as fife and drum music in Brazil, that also have parallels.

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[210] Kenneth Bilby, 'Caribbean Crucible' in *Repercussions*, ed. by Geoffrey Haydon, and Dennis Marks (London: Century Publishing, 1985), pp. 128-51 (pp. 137-8).
[211] *Daily Argosy* – 'A Christmas Street Scene', 22 December 1935, p. 7; 'Another Typical New Year Scene', 5 January 1936, p. 7. This shows a band with masquerade characters including a stilt walker dressed up as a woman. This is a parallel with the Mother Sally character found in Barbados. Thanks to John Cowley for bringing these to my attention.
[212] Bilby, 'Caribbean Crucible', p. 149, Note 4.

Early nineteenth-century writers document the use of fifes and drums by the black population.[213] It seems likely wherever African slaves came into contact with a European population in the New World, that the slaves adopted the fife, and or fiddle, and military style drum. For example, in 1799 Fortescue Cuming noted in New Orleans seeing 'vast numbers of Negro slaves, men, women and children, assembled together [...] drumming, fifing and dancing in large rings.[214]

The places discussed are arranged geographically from north to south. A sketch map showing their locations can be found in Appendix B, p. 302.

**The United States of America**

Much of the use of fifes and drums in the United States may be attributed to African American men serving in the army. During the American Revolution, 1775-1783, many did so, and in Virginia many of the servicemen from that state were employed as drummers and fifers.

In Mississippi fife and drum bands are associated with gatherings such as Sunday picnics and community meetings; the sound of the band is the call to meet, a signalling device from the days when communication between neighbours was difficult and such events were of great significance in the community. The band consists of a cane fife, a snare drum and a bass drum, occasionally a second snare drum is included, as in a tuk band. Work carried out by David Evans and others in the early 1970s revealed the widespread existence of fife and drum

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[213] For example, Alexander Barclay, *A Practical View of the Present State of Slavery in the West Indies* (London: Smith Elder, 1826), pp. 10-3, and James Kelly, *Voyage to Jamaica, and Seventeen Years' Residence in that Island* (Belfast: J. Wilson, 1838), pp. 20-1.

[214] *Sketches of a Tour to the Western Country, Through the States of Ohio and Kentucky; A Voyage down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, and a Trip Through the Mississippi Territory, and Part of West Florida* (Pittsburgh: Cramer, Spear & Eichbaum, 1810) cited in Dena J. Epstein, 'African Music in British and French America' in *Musical Quarterly USA*, 59 (1973), 61-91 (p. 85).

bands in Mississippi. Evans mentions the noting by Harry Oster at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries of a group that 'was described as "an old field band" consisting of cane fife, snare, kettle and bass drums'.[215] This illustrates that the working classes played this type of music.

The bands also played on Christmas Eve and on holidays such as Independence Day. Evans says the summer picnics were all-black affairs, although historically some bands were said to play at white picnics. A picnic was a weekend event, starting on Friday night and could have included baseball and other games, and a jukebox, but 'the high point and focus of the whole picnic, however, is the fife and drum music and dancing'.[216] The music would stop at midnight on the Saturday, as the drums were not played on Sundays.[217] This type of music was not played in church but the repertoire of the bands included spirituals as well as popular songs and other secular music such as minstrel songs. As in sung tuk, the lyrics might be on any subject.

It is interesting to note that the name kettledrum is applied to the snare drum in Mississippi, as in Barbados, which suggests a possible relationship between the two musics, as does the use of two snare drums in both formations at some point in their history. Certainly in Mississippi, two snares were used in 1942 when Alan Lomax recorded the Sid Hemphill band.[218]

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[215] 'Black Fife and Drum Music in Mississippi', *Mississippi Folklore Register*, 6 (1972), 94-107 (pp. 95, 99).
[216] Ibid., p. 99.
[217] William Ferris, 'Othar Turner, Cane Fife Maker', *Afro-American Folk Art and* Crafts (1983), 172-80 (p. 177).
[218] David Evans, CD sleeve notes, *Traveling through the Jungle* (Testament Records, TCD 5017).

The drum rhythms are complex with ornamentation, as tuk is, except when the basic rhythms, as shown earlier, pp. 150-3, are played. Unlike tuk, the Mississippi music sounds reminiscent of a military marching band as the unison drumming helps to create a sound that gives the impression of there being a whole corps of drums, not just three individuals. Survivals of American fife and drum such as those in Mississippi that have largely retained their military qualities with little change from the traditions of the seventeenth century can be attributed to the lack of exposure to African influence, unlike that experienced in the Caribbean. Where the African influence was stronger, the music has taken on stylistic variations.[219] A notable difference that I have seen in photographs of Mississippi fife and drum bands is that the fife is played to the left rather than the usual right.[220] The fifes are traditionally home-made from local cane but this art may die out with the older generation of players. One band that I have seen video footage of had a very large bass drum, much bigger than that used in tuk, and which was played with two beaters instead of one.[221]

A further variation on fife and drum can be found in Georgia. This is also performed with fife, kettledrum and bass drum. The kettledrum does not sound like it has a snare. It is not as rhythmically complex as the music found in Mississippi but it is not possible to pick out separate drum rhythms as there is little variation, both drums seemingly playing exactly the same. There are not the

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[219] In North Carolina, an area populated by Barbadian planters and slaves, a John Kunering (also spelled John Canoe or Jonkonnu) ceremony was held at Christmas time and featured characters such as the ragman, dressed in an outfit of rags wearing a mask and animal horns; and a man dressed in his best suit who would carry a bowl to collect gifts from onlookers. The ragman may be a parallel with the Shaggy Bear character found with Barbadian tuk bands, discussed earlier, pp. 134-5. The musicians would play gumba boxes – wooden frames with animal skins stretched over them and there would be extemporised song. The use of fifes and drums is not however mentioned. Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 69-73.

[220] Evans, *Traveling through the Jungle*.

[221] 'Jessie Mae's Fife and Drum Band' featured on *Deep Blues* (Channel 4/Sound Stuff Production).

varying 'speeds' as in tuk, but rather a piece might start at one speed and gradually get faster. Neither the Mississippi nor the Georgia fife and drum use metal percussion as do tuk bands.

There are also fife and drum bands in the United States that do not sound like tuk bands and are very military in musical style, and in some cases, appearance. One example is The Fifes and Drums of Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia, a corps of fifers and drummers dating from 1958 with a specific role in the historic militia re-enactments of Colonial Williamsburg, dressed in period army uniforms, playing traditional military tunes of the colonial period.[222] Historically corps of fifes and drums who wore military style uniforms seem to have been commonplace in the United States, and the Company of Fifers and Drummers works to document and preserve this heritage.[223]

**Bermuda**

Gombey (or gombay) is the Bermudan version of fife and drum. Gombey is a crowd of male dancers and musicians who perform in the streets at holiday time, especially Christmas. In the past gombey music has used snare drum, bass drum, fife, triangle and whistle, though the use of fife and triangle are rare today. The whistle is used by the captain to give commands to the dancers – this is similar to the use of the whistle in Landship dancing, undoubtedly showing some naval influence. A description of gombey written in 1890 states that:

> groups of men and boys (women seldom take part) parade about the country, going from house to house singing, dancing, and playing on rude

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[222] Sleeve notes, The Fifes and Drums of Colonial Williamsburg, *Marching Out of Time* (The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation: WSC-118, 1989).
[223] Susan Cifaldi, 'The Company of Fifers and Drummers: Preserving the Music of the Ancient Fifes and Drums', *Sonneck Society Bulletin*, 16 (1990), pp. 50-3.

> musical instruments, among which the triangle and tambourine are prominent, penny whistles and concertinas being also called to their aid.[224]

Many West Indians who moved to Bermuda to work on the construction of the naval dockyards between 1900 and 1906 were from St Kitts and Nevis, which has its own fife and drum tradition, one that Gaugert suggests was inherited from Irish indentured servants.[225] The movement of people from St Kitts and Nevis also took fife and drum traditions to the Dominican Republic where according to Bilby the ensembles 'incorporate costumed dancers who recite passages from British mummers' plays'.[226]

**Jamaica**

In Jamaica fife and drum music was used for Jonkonnu, a folk festival traditionally associated with Christmas, but also performed for other occasions. A late twentieth century photograph of a Christmas procession in Jamaica shows a band consisting of a flute, a small snare drum and another drum carried as if a bass drum, although much smaller.[227] Jonkonnu is now a parade of male costumed dancers as well as the Jonkonnu character. Costumes may include kings and queens, sailors and animal characters. Another character known as Pitchy Patchy is very similar to the Shaggy Bear character found in Barbados in that he wears a costume made of strips of bright fabric, and is very athletic.

Bettelheim suggests that there is some relationship between Jamaican Jonkonnu and that found in Nassau in the Bahamas. She says that in the late 1880s the

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[224] H. Carrington Bolton, 'Gombay: A Festal Rite of Bermudian Negroes', *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, 3 (1890), 222-6 (p. 223).
[225] Richard Gaugert, 'Mas in St Kitts and Nevis' ([n.p., n.pub.] 1988).
[226] Bilby, 'Caribbean Crucible' (p. 138).
[227] James Ferguson, *Far From Paradise: An Introduction to Caribbean Development* (London: Latin America Bureau, 1990), p. 13.

*Nassau Guardian* 'reported an increase in the number of fife and drum bands and masqueraders parading on Bay Street on Christmas Day'.[228] Jonkonnu is also found in Belize.

**The Virgin Islands**

According to Lekis the typical bands of the Virgin Islands use instruments derived from the military bands – flutes or fifes, drums, iron triangles and a brass horn.[229] In the U.S. Virgin Islands of St Thomas, St John and St Croix, which were Danish for two hundred years until 1917 when they were bought by the United States, Dutch planters were dominant during the eighteenth century and a Dutch Creole was spoken there.[230] A band consisting of a fife, bass drum, a snare drum and a triangle to accompany Mocko Jumbies is noted by Robert W. Nicholls.[231] Such bands would tour the streets on holidays and perform outside homes in return for gifts of money or food. This parallels with the tuk band, as do the names of the snare drum and triangle as kettle and steel.

**Anguilla**

There are many Anguillans descended from Irish colonists, which could explain the existence of fife and drum music there. Lomax et al. note that cane fife and drum bands were sometimes played for dancing in the country as evening entertainment.[232] Lomax says that when he recorded in Anguilla in the late 1950s he found that 'red-hot fife-and-drum combos dominated the celebrations [...]

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[228] Nunley and Bettelheim, *Caribbean Festival Arts*, p. 89.
[229] Lekis, 'The Origin and Development of Ethnic Caribbean Dance and Music', p. 242.
[230] CD sleeve notes, *Zoop Zoop Zoop: traditional music and folklore of St Croix, St Thomas and St John* (New World: DIDX 17718, n.d).
[231] 'The Mocko Jumbie of the U. S. Virgin Islands, History and Antecedents', p. 49.
[232] Alan Lomax, J. D. Elder, and Bess Lomax Hawes, *Brown Girl in the Ring: An Anthology of Song Games from the Eastern Caribbean* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1997), p. 131.

playing jigs, reels and quadrilles'.[233] Fife and drum had then maintained a strong tradition well into the twentieth century.

**Antigua**

Like Barbados, Antigua was under British rule exclusively (excepting six months in 1666) from colonisation to Independence, which was gained in 1981.[234] Again paralleling Barbados, the churches in Antigua suppressed African music and European music was advocated as being acceptable. There are a number of musical features that reflect the colonial impact as well as some African influences. An old Christmas festival used to include stilt dancers accompanied by a band made up of fife, triangle, boom pipe and a kettle and a bass drum. McDaniel says that the Highland fling is danced at carnival and that maypole dancing is fused into modern Antiguan dance.[235]

**St Kitts and Nevis**

As suggested by the movement of people from St Kitts and Nevis to Bermuda, there are musical parallels to be drawn. Bermudan gombey is almost identical to masquerade in St Kitts. The main difference is that in St Kitts the big (bass) drum, kettledrum and fife are used, whereas in Bermuda the fife is not. The Kittitian ensemble looks like a tuk band except for its use of a transverse fife rather than penny whistle, and is known as 'Big Drum'.[236] A photograph in an article published in 1901 shows the drums used then were military style rather than African. It is not

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[233] Alan Lomax, *The Land Where the Blues Began* (London: Minerva Education - Mandarin Paperbacks, 1994), p. 333.
[234] Lorna McDaniel, 'Antigua and Barbuda' in *South America, Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean*, ed. by Dale A. Olsen and Daniel E. Sheehy, The Garland Encylopedia of World Music, 2 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), pp. 798-800 (p. 798).
[235] McDaniel, 'Antigua and Barbuda', p. 799.
[236] For photographs see www.islandimage.com/schs/folklore.htm

possible unfortunately to pick out a fife player.[237] A more recent, though undated photograph, shows a side drum called a 'kettle' and bass drum called a 'big drum' in use in what are called 'Christmas Sports', which include masquerade.[238]

Field recordings of fife and drum music in St Kitts and Nevis, made by Alan Lomax in 1962, are to be released on a Rounder Records CD in 2002. These tracks include a quadrille and 'speeches and toasts' in the local mumming tradition. These will provide an interesting and perhaps illuminating comparison with tuk.[239]

**Montserrat**

One traditional dance was the jumbie dance, which was accompanied by a fife, a triangle and two drums – one large and one small, sometimes with metal discs like a tambourine. The drums are the same shape, and played in the same way as the Irish bodhran. The use of this instrument in Montserrat would seem to be attributable to the musical traditions of the long-standing Irish community, the Irish being the first permanent settlers there in 1632.[240]

Another Montserratian custom was masquerade dancers dressed as British Grenadier Guards who would dance French and English quadrilles to the music of a band consisting of a fife or concertina, two flat drums and a triangle. As in Barbados, musicians would sometimes call into rum shops and play in return for drinks, and dancing might start up.[241]

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[237] Dorothy Harding, 'Mystery Plays in the West Indies', *Wide World Magazine,* 7 (1901) 189-91.
[238] Mills and Jones-Hendrickson, *Christmas Sports in St Kitts-Nevis*, p. 50.
[239] Personal correspondence with Kenneth Bilby, 27 January 2002.
[240] John Messenger, 'Montserrat' in *South America, Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean*, pp. 922-6. The jumbie dance is documented as having disappeared by 1995 when the volcanic eruption caused devastation and enforced the departure of the majority of the population. Local traditions may well have suffered significant decline since then.
[241] Jay D. Dobbin, *The Jombee Dance of Montserrat* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1986), pp. 11, 51.

### Curaçao

In Curaçao the music of a small drum, an iron triangle and a small flute-like whistle is associated with the folkloric arrival of walking ghosts, and also to accompany a tumba-like dance found only in rural areas.[242] The tumba is a ballroom-type dance and the music is also used to accompany calypso type songs.

### Suriname

Kaseko is a creole dance music that exhibits colonial military influence. It has some similarities to calypso, but is distinguishable 'by the busy patterns played on the snare drum said to be derived from the drumming of Dutch colonial military bands, as well as the heavy accents of a large bass drum called *skratji*, played with a hand-held beater'. Various melodic instruments such as guitar, brass, and woodwind were added to create 'a uniquely Surinamese sound'.[243] I have not had the opportunity to hear any of this music, but note the parallels to tuk in the use of the snare and bass drums. The 'busy patterns played on the snare drum' can be compared to the kittle in tuk where the same description could be applied.

## COMPARING TUK WITH OTHER MUSICS

On hearing other fife and drum musics of the region the similarity can be heard, and in some cases, it might not be possible to say whether this was tuk or one of its cousins. In most cases the use of the snare drum, bass drum and penny whistle or fife give a distinctive sound, which together with the style of playing are symbolic of this musical genre. Occasional use of another instrument would reveal a different identity.

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[242] Lekis, 'The Origin and Development of Ethnic Caribbean Dance and Music' , pp. 226-7.
[243] Kenneth Bilby, '"Roots Explosion": Indigenization and Cosmopolitanism in Contemporary Surinamese Popular Music' in *Ethnomusicology*, 43 (1999), 256-96 (p. 264).

As I have already noted, one particular music, that whilst similar to tuk exhibits some differences, is fife and drum from Mississippi. The use of a transverse home-made cane fife as opposed to a vertical penny whistle may partially be responsible, the sound is less shrill and the register is more restricted. Also, the drumming certainly gives a much more military flavour to the music than that found in tuk. A further difference is that the Mississippi recordings I have heard sound less polished than some of the tuk I have heard. This may be because much of the tuk I have heard is very recent whereas the Mississippi recordings I have heard were made in 1942.[244] The Mississippi recordings were made for the Folk Song Archive of the Library of Congress by Alan Lomax who travelled extensively with the specific purpose of recording folk music and song. Unfortunately there is very little of this type of music recorded and available commercially. What does exist is difficult to find, and often not clearly documented. Old recordings often bundle together musics as being 'West Indian' or 'Caribbean', and thus it is impossible to be certain about when, where and in what circumstances they were made. The other more recent recordings of Mississippi fife and drum seem to have been made at live events, such as the picnics with which this music is synonymous. This could explain why the music seems less strict than modern tuk. It is not a staged performance at an official event, but an informal performance, spontaneously responding to the mood of the event and the audience.

What is probably the second oldest tuk recording I have acquired dates from the late 1960s and is of a Landship tuk band.[245] This can be heard on Track 7 of the accompanying CD. This, and the recording I obtained from the National Sound Archive, which may be older, are evidence that despite the recontextualisation of

[244] Evans, *Traveling through the Jungle*.
[245] Recording kindly provided by Alfred Pragnell from his private collection.

tuk, it still basically sounds the same today as it did more than thirty years ago and has retained its military drumming characteristics.[246] It is also possible to pick out the same rhythms used in both older and more recent performances. The fact that the repertoire has changed merely reflects the tradition of tuk bands playing popular tunes of the time. If I could obtain some recent recordings of Mississippi fife and drum it would be possible to ascertain whether this has undergone any change since the Lomax recordings were made.

In Barbados there are only two commercial tuk recordings, both made in the 1990s.[247] A tour of other places specifically searching for such recordings might produce a wealth of material for comparative purposes. I believe in Mississippi there has been more documentation partly because of the development of blues, the focus of great study, and musics that have influenced its musicians have likewise received attention.[248]

## PART 3

# THE CONTEMPORARY TUK SCENE

### The Bands

During the early twentieth century tuk bands were fairly common, usually one in each village.[249] Best suggests that on bank holidays 'it was not uncommon to see this roving band of practitioners encroaching on, overtaking and inviting

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[246] National Sound Archive master tape C881/115, Overseas Film and Television Centre collection, Tracks 4 and 5.
[247] Ruk-a-Tuk International, *Christmas – Indigenous Tuk Band of Barbados* (1996) Ruk-a-Tuk International, *Indigenous Tuk Band Music of Barbados* (WIRL, WK335, 1996).
[248] See for example; Evans, 'Black Fife and Drum Music in Mississippi'; Lomax, *The Land Where the Blues Began.*
[249] Interview with Gerald Hunte, 26 April 2000.

themselves into the domains of popular gatherings'.[250] However the effects of change and recontextualisation mean that such impromptu activity has ceased and by the mid-1990s there were officially only seven bands in existence:

Salt Fish Soup
Corbin's Tuk Band
Bandits (now known as Ruk-a-Tuk International)
Youth & Experience
Black Pudding
Troubadours International
Rose Hill Tuk Band

I was fortunate to see the first five of these perform at the tuk band competition I attended in 1998, as well as four school tuk bands. I have also seen Ruk-a-Tuk International, Black Pudding, Troubadours International and Rose Hill Tuk Band perform elsewhere during my other field trips. Ruk-a-Tuk and Black Pudding have regular bookings in hotels and can be heard playing throughout the year. Other bands appear occasionally at various events including appearances at the Oistins Fish Festival and Holetown Festival. It is possible that one or two of the bands only actually get together for the annual competition.

## The Musicians

There are almost two distinct classes of tuk player today – the older generation who learned their tuk from players who toured rum shops; and the younger generation who have learned by a mixture of observation and self-teaching. Some of the older generation have been reluctant to pass on what they know to the younger generation and apparently some of the older tuk players forbid anyone to touch their drums.[251] Wayne 'Poonka' Willock, a key figure in tuk whose contribution to its revival will be discussed later, pp. 198-200, found when he

[250] *Barbadian Popular Music and the Politics of Caribbean Culture*, p. 13.
[251] Interview with David Headley, Tuk drummer, 4 August 1998.
Telephone conversation with Karl Watson, 25 April 2000.

started trying to learn tuk from the older players that he came up against some barriers. They did not want to share their knowledge with him through explanation or demonstration, so much of what he learned he did so by observation and experimentation. Precisely why the older players did not want to share their knowledge is unclear. Willock wonders if this was perhaps because they simply wanted to let the tuk band die out with them.[252]

There are few tuk musicians today and, as in the past, none makes a full-time occupation from it. Most play tuk for their own enjoyment rather than for the earnings potential, though the more successful bands can now command regular bookings at the large hotels that stage cultural shows for their guests. Bands that play in hotels may have four bookings each week. Each of these is probably for a twenty-minute show for which they receive monetary payment and may be provided with drinks by the establishment. Travelling time must however be added into the equation – one member of one band with regular bookings lives in the parish of St Lucy in the far north of the island, and he may well spend two hours travelling to perform at one show. The money they receive is extra income, around BDS $100 (approximately £30) each for each show, and a regular income from a number of these shows can be worthwhile.

There is a wide range of professionalism in tuk bands. The quality of the playing really is evident in the flute and kittle. The better players are prepared with the standard tunes and rhythms and a variety of ways to improvise and enhance those. The poorer players play the standard tunes and rhythms (or their version of them) only. It is also noticeable however that it is the younger bands who tend to

[252] Interview, 27 November 1997.

improvise more and play slightly slower than the older players who tend to keep to the more standard rhythms. It is perhaps these differences that reinforce the recontextualisation of tuk. The bands who may not practice together, but simply come together to make music and enjoy it, are probably a truer reflection of the traditional plantation tuk band playing for dances and special occasions. The more professional tuk bands who practice to refine their skills and give a more polished, precise performance, are examples of how the art has been recontextualised to serve the people who employ them to provide a staged show. There is a certain amount of friction between some of the players in the two different 'camps' and I believe this arises for two key reasons. Firstly, the older players are not impressed with changes being made to tuk and they perceive no need for it to change. Secondly, some of the older players do not approve of where tuk is performed and, in some instances, they object to the fact that the younger players are paid for performing.

I have had one older player positively berate one of the more successful younger players to me, criticising how he plays, what he does with the music and where he performs. The older player told me that the younger one does not in fact play tuk at all. I questioned him on this point, keen to find out what he thought the younger player did actually play. He told me the difference was the rhythms. I asked him to demonstrate for me the tuk rhythms as he knew them. He was not however keen to do this, saying he didn't have sticks handy. I asked if he could tap or clap the rhythms out instead but he refused. I felt this was not really an issue about how tuk is played and from other comments made during the interview, I believe

the friction has arisen because one earns more than the other and is seen to be more successful.[253]

Some of the older players don't necessarily operate within the protocols expected by the audience, competition judges and, on occasion, their fellow band members, and I saw some examples of this at the 1998 tuk band competition. Part way through playing the first piece, the bass drum player of one band who looked rather bored, raised his arm and looked at his watch as if either in a hurry to get away, or wondering how much longer this might go on for. In another band the flute player constantly played wrong notes so that whilst the tune was vaguely recognisable, it sounded wrong to at least some of the audience.

A further demonstration by another flute player revealed a lack of sense of occasion, which might suggest to some that he should be playing in rum shops, not on a public stage. The player was apparently not happy with the way the drummers were playing and said something to them. He then stood with his arms folded refusing to play. When the drummers gave in and stopped playing, the flute player gave them instructions about how to play, and only joined in when he was happy with their playing. Some of the audience were amused, whilst others heckled him. The drummers appeared to be unperturbed, although the competition judges looked rather unimpressed. Willock told me that it is not uncommon for some players to quarrel on stage and walk off in the middle of a performance.[254]

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[253] Due to the nature of the comments made during this interview, I prefer not to reveal the identities of the two players discussed.
[254] Conversation, 20 February 2001.

The difference in quality of playing can be partially attributed to the attitude and background of the players. The older players whose playing is more evocative of what seems to have been the traditional tuk bands, are those who are working class and grew up when education ceased at the age of fourteen. The younger players, who tend to be more professional in their approach, are middle class and have grown up in an age of compulsory secondary education. An important point about the younger players is that they have consciously chosen to play tuk. The older players grew up when tuk was more common and it would not have been unusual for them to play. For at least some of the younger players however, this conscious choice to play tuk has stemmed from a nationalistic desire to preserve and perpetuate the art form.

**Junior Tuk Musicians**

There are also a number of up-coming teenage players who have learned tuk as part of schemes, which will be discussed later, pp. 212-8. These players exhibit a range of skill and approach. One band I have seen is of a very high standard. A key feature of junior bands seems to be the variations in line-up. Some include extra drums and one I have seen included maracas and cowbell alongside the usual instruments as can be seen in Photograph 15 below. This band can be heard on Track 8 on the accompanying CD.[255]

[255] Recording made by Sharon Meredith at Tuk Band Competition, 1 August 1998.

Photograph 15: Garrison Secondary School Tuk Band

The girl playing kittle had the drum on a very short strap and played with her left hand resting on the drum's rim as can be seen in Photograph 16 below.[256]

Photograph 16

She also held the sticks in an unusual fashion but, largely because of the position of the drum, she could not beat the drum with as much force as if she carried the

[256] Photographs taken by John Meredith at Tuk Band Competition, 1 August 1998.

drum in a more conventional position. This could be interpreted as a further adaptation of tuk as the genre is adopted by another generation and given new ideas.

**Women Tuk Musicians**

Tuk is an activity generally associated with men although there were some women playing tuk in the last three decades of the twentieth century. They no longer play and no one seems to recall who they were. One historic reason for women not playing tuk is likely to be the association of tuk with the back room of rum shops, where respectable women would not venture (this was discussed in Chapter 1, pp. 77-8). Another, maybe more deep-rooted, but sub-conscious possibility is a point raised by Herskovits; 'as in all African and African-derived cultures, drumming is for men.' He explains that there is a taboo that if women break the rule, their breasts will lengthen until they drag on the ground.[257] Vern Best, a well-known Barbadian drummer, told me that drumming is 'man's work' and suggested something [negative] may be invoked in a woman's body by drumming.[258] Interestingly, photographs I have seen of tuk bands with female members showed them playing flute and triangle, not drum.[259] Adisa Andwele suggests that because tuk was not widely acceptable for men, then it would have been more difficult for women to play – it would be 'seen as being unwomanlike'.[260]

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[257] Melville J. Herskovits, *Cultural Anthropology*, rev. edn (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1970), p. 193.
[258] Interview, 2 May 2000.
[259] Photograph on cover of *Crop Over Festival Magazine 1988*, National Cultural Foundation and Barbados Board of Tourism – female flute player.
Photograph on cover of Curwen Best, *Roots to Popular Culture: Barbadian Aesthetics: Kamau Brathwaite to Hardcore Styles* (London: Macmillan Education, 2001) – almost certainly a Landship tuk band, shows female triangle player wearing nurse's uniform.
[260] Interview, 14 February 2001. Andwele is Senior Business Development Officer at The National Cultural Foundation, and is also a musician.

Since the mid-1990s however the recontextualisation of tuk has provided opportunities for girls to participate in tuk, notably through the tuk workshops and the Cultural and Historical Exposure for Kids in Schools scheme, which will be discussed later, pp. 212-8. Changes in roles for women during the twentieth century have of course led to women participating in what were previously considered to be male activities in all walks of life, so it is not surprising that girls are taking part in tuk. What remains to be seen is how many girls will continue beyond their school years and play in bands as adults. I suspect there will be very few if any – even for the boys it will probably be only the select few who have achieved well that might continue, as generally happens with the learning of any musical instrument.

## Tuk's Perception in Barbados Today

What has happened, particularly over the last thirty years, is that tuk has changed its image from an impromptu village entertainment to a rehearsed, polished, staged musical form. Opportunities for impromptu performances by a tuk band such as those described by Best where the band would invite themselves into popular gatherings have effectively disappeared.[261] Nowadays, if the organisers of any event, whether it be a Government reception, or a hotel show, want a tuk band to perform, they will book one.

Tuk enjoys a diverse appreciation. There are those who deride it as something low class and beneath them, only played by old men who drink too much rum. There are others who enjoy hearing a tuk band and think that it is good that there are still tuk players. Then there are those with the official view that tuk is

[261] Best, *Barbadian Popular Music*, p. 13.

Barbados' indigenous music and it should therefore be played at official functions, for tourists and be part of the country's education scheme.

Barbadian historian Trevor Marshall, commenting on the promotion of indigenous art forms claimed that 'the Tuk Band is accepted now as a musical signature for Barbadians'.[262] Who exactly it is accepted by he does not say. However, from discussions I have had at the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, and the National Cultural Foundation, I believe it is those in charge of making decisions in the country, not the average Barbadian.[263] Andwele says that tuk 'has been legitimised now as part of the whole culture of Barbados', and suggests that if tuk is 'visible [...] it please officialdom more'. That is very much the impression I have gained. Andwele believes the fact tuk is now part of all major festivals, is part of opening ceremonies and is now taught in schools:

> shows how far not only tuk has come, but how far Barbados has come in terms of its cultural growth and artistic development and the fact that the country has recognised that tuk is one of the cornerstones of our artistic expression, and that is a tremendous achievement.[264]

Alissandra Cummins believes that tuk reminds Barbadians of a certain generation (aged thirty and over) of their Barbadian heritage, that it is:

> a component of that Barbadian identity that they can recall when necessary, but anything more than that it tends to be ceremonial occasions when they like to see it, when they are aware of it, when it can be accessible to them.[265]

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[262] *Notes on the History and Evolution of Calypso in Barbados* (Cave Hill: Department of History, University of the West Indies, 1986), p. 36.
[263] Interview with Ellsworth Young, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 18 February 1999. Interview with David Jordan, Cultural Officer, National Cultural Foundation, 3 May 2000. Interview with Adisa Andwele, 14 February 2001.
[264] Interview, 14 February 2001.
[265] Interview, 15 February 2001. Cummins is Director of the Barbados Museum.

From conversations I have had with Barbadians, particularly elderly people, I believe there are many people who know about tuk but are unwilling to relate this for fear of being looked down on or given a bad reputation for knowing about these things. Peggy McGeary believes that many Barbadians are very class conscious and that they may not react positively to something like tuk for fear of who might see them and think less of them for it.[266]

There may be some who simply do not wish to relate such information to an outsider. I have not actually been aware of this being a problem, but it may have existed. However, Barbadians can come up against a negative attitude towards Barbadian culture. McGeary told me that when she was collecting the material for her university project that eventually contributed to the *Folksongs of Barbados* book, one old lady questioned why a university person was interested in 'the foolish old songs'.[267]

Hill says that 'tradition is belief; it is a mental image of the past in the present'.[268] I believe this to be the case with people not remembering, or choosing not to recall things they don't want to be associated with or don't want other people to know they know about. Some examples of this became clear when I spent an afternoon at a rest home interviewing some of the residents aged seventy-five to one hundred years. One gentleman, aged one hundred, said of tuk that he 'never had much admiration for that' and that he couldn't tell me anything. I tried another angle and asked what he could tell me about the Landship – he started talking about the volunteer force. The nurse sitting with us reminded him I wanted to

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[266] Interview, 5 December 1997.
[267] Interview, 5 December 1997.
[268] Donald R. Hill, *Calypso Calaloo: Early Carnival Music in Trinidad* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1973), p. 114.

know about the Landship to which he replied 'I ain't talking about the Landship'. He was however keen to talk at length and coherently about any number of things, except tuk and the Landship. It may have been that he did not know anything, but I thought it unusual that he did not make any observation at all. Perhaps like with the Landship, he simply did not, for whatever reason, want to talk about it.[269]

Two ladies, aged eighty-five, engaged in an interesting discussion. One, Virginia Moore, seemed to know something but wouldn't talk about it. The other, Jeneth Novelle, said of Miss Moore and the tuk band that 'when she heard them coming up she ran out to see the band, she can't deny it, the band used to be sweet sounding and all the children running out and she is one of them'. She told Miss Moore she 'had better talk the truth', following which they engaged in some minor argument. Whatever Miss Moore knew she was certainly not going to tell. Mrs Novelle however was happy to talk about what she could remember.[270]

Another significant factor affecting the acceptance of tuk has been religion. Barbados has been strongly Anglican through colonial times and this has led to low tolerance of certain activities. One gentleman I interviewed, aged ninety-five, told me that he sometimes heard tuk music, but was never interested in it. He explained that his mother was very strict and a churchgoer, so tuk was something that would definitely not have been encouraged.[271] Presumably the view was that respectable people who went to church and lived a Godly life did not take part in any activity considered disreputable such as visiting rum shops or listening to tuk bands. Thus the association of tuk with rum shops may have prejudiced people against tuk simply because they did not approve of rum shops.

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[269] Interview with Gladstone Cox, retired insurance clerk, 18 February 2001.
[270] Interview, 18 February 2001.
[271] Interview with Litchfield Edwards, retired clerk, 18 February 2001.

Tuk's recontextualisation and official acceptance is contributing to a change in attitude towards it and the image of tuk players is gradually changing. Wayne Willock, suggested that perhaps there is 'still some of the old-time colonial thing' in some people's minds about drums and so on. He told me that in Barbados he found that it was generally perceived that tuk players are of low socio-economic status and not well educated.[272] He is university educated and works as a secondary school languages teacher, neither consistent with the perceived image. The tuk players of today are from a variety of backgrounds, bus driver, civil servant, plumber, to mention a few of their occupations.

## THE NEW AGE OF TUK

What was necessary after Independence was to effectively create a Barbadian identity that reflected the heritage of the black population, trying to discard the imposed values of the former colonial masters. This involved, to some extent, the invention of tradition, which is not as uncommon an exercise as might be supposed. Hobsbawm says that "'traditions" which appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented'. He continues that:

> the term 'invented tradition' [...] includes both 'traditions' actually invented, constructed and formally instituted and those emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and dateable period – a matter of a few years perhaps – and establishing themselves with great rapidity.[273]

In reality, traditions are only what they are perceived to be in the current time, and probably all have been adapted over a period of time. If something is to survive it needs to change and adapt itself to suit the needs of the society it survives in. Even so-called rituals or ceremonies, which may have ancient origins, have to

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[272] Interview, 27 November 1997.
[273] Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions' in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: The Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1983), 1-14 (p. 1).

adapt. My own work on the Kandy Esala Perahera in Sri Lanka reveals how a sacred act of devotion for Sinhalese Buddhists has been turned into a mass spectacle generating a vast industry around it. Whilst this has not diminished the religious aspect of the event, it shows how it has developed and responded to the society of the day, now a very welcome source of revenue for the local area.[274]

What has happened in Barbados has been the invention of a tuk tradition that has given it a higher position in society. The traditional outlet for tuk, the rum shop, and the people who it belonged to - the working class population - no longer had a need for tuk, and few people chose to carry on with it, preferring to adopt other musical genres. Thus placing tuk at official functions and including it in tourist entertainment packages where tuk is promulgated as the indigenous music of the country with its roots in the heritage of the African slaves, represents one way tuk has been recontextualised. More recently including it in the country's education programme could be construed as a further recontextualisation as children are taught that tuk is part of their cultural heritage, and the intention is to perpetuate this heritage through successive generations. The act of placing tuk in events and contexts it was not historically associated with and including it in education is seeking to inculcate all Barbadians to accept tuk as an established part of their heritage and identity, even though it was traditionally only associated with certain quarters of society. I would suggest therefore that whilst tuk itself is not an invented tradition, such recontextualisations of tuk do represent an invented tradition and that tuk can be considered an important part of Barbadian identity.

[274] 'The Role of Music in the Kandy Esala Perahera', (master's dissertation, Kingston University, 1996).

An interesting parallel can be drawn with the adoption of samba as part of the identity of Brazil. Samba belonged to the lower classes, generally the black population. Political changes in the 1920s and the growing importance of Brazilian carnival saw a change in attitude to the African heritage of Brazilians. In 1932 the carnival in Rio became government sponsored and took on the role as a national festival. As carnival became more important, samba's acceptance by the white elite of society increased, and it came to be a symbol of the Brazilian nation.[275]

Much tuk performed today is for the benefit of tourists and visiting foreign dignitaries. As discussed earlier, some hotels include tuk bands as part of their cultural shows often with a Mother Sally and a tiltman. These shows are generally well received and tourists I have interviewed made generally positive comments about the music, saying they had enjoyed it and the accompanying visual support of the folk characters, although generally it is not like anything they had seen or heard before. Such shows mean that some of the visitors to the country are given an albeit brief glimpse of some relatively authentic culture. This is important otherwise many would go home believing steelbands or reggae to be Barbados' music.

This inclusion of traditional cultural forms in tourist shows causes concern for some. For example, the Director of the Barbados Museum, Alissandra Cummins, was interviewed by Polly Patullo for her book on the cost of tourism in the Caribbean, and said 'I would hesitate, for example, to get the Barbadian Landship movement involved in tourism because of the risk of exploitation and the negation

[275] Lisa Shaw, *The Social History of the Brazilian Samba* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1999), pp. 10-1.

of our culture'.[276] This highlights the problem – is tuk to be promoted in tourism at the expense of it maintaining its traditions and not be devalued, or should it be kept purely for its original purpose of entertaining the working classes (if indeed they still value it). When I interviewed Cummins I asked her what she thought about tuk bands playing on the hotel circuit, predominantly for tourists, and cutting out locals' access to the music. She replied that she is 'grateful to the tourism industry for ensuring that it survives because obviously it can only survive if the practitioners are in some way supported financially'. She expressed regret however that younger generations of Barbadians might see tuk 'as simply another colourful aspect of what is offered as entertainment in hotels and not recognising necessarily that it is part of their heritage'.[277] Cummins may be hoping that the Landship can be saved from this. Such conscientious beliefs may explain why tuk is not as widely accepted in tourism in Barbados as, for example, mento is in Jamaica. Mento has a similar historical background to tuk and is also being used to promote its country's culture.

The problem of course is that times have moved on and tuk's purpose has changed, and necessarily so. In this age of multimedia entertainment, does tuk have a place in its original context? In reality it does not and if it is not to be consigned to the history books (albeit what little there is) then it is crucial that it moves with the times, adapting and re-inventing itself to suit a created purpose. That purpose of representing Barbados musically is an important one, for Barbados and for tuk. As discussed in Chapter 1, pp. 83-4, other Caribbean countries have a music and/or a dance form that is associated with them, which contribute to the country's identity and which could also be identified as the

[276] *Last Resorts: The Cost of Tourism in the Caribbean* (London: Cassell, 1996), pp. 197-8.
[277] Interview, 15 February 2001.

establishment of something unique to help with marketing the country to attract tourists. Tuk does not yet serve such a definitive role in Barbados' national identity for several reasons. Unlike reggae, it has not crossed all the divides of society, though there are steps to address this through tuk's inclusion in cultural activities and education. Steelband music is widely popular and its repertoire is wide-ranging. Tuk band repertoire is also wide-ranging but what it does not have in comparison with steelbands is the sound. What is produced by an array of steel pans (or sometimes just a few) is melodic with different parts providing harmony. In the tuk band only the flute provides the melody and there is no harmony. The combination of instruments in the tuk band provides a different type of sound to a steelband, and for those who prefer a more melodic sound, pans would provide this. Tuk with its at times shrill flute, tightly rhythmic kittle and booming bass drum is not subtle – it is not a music that blends into the background, it demands to be listened to. Steelband music however can be loud or quiet, and quite easily slips into the background as easy listening music.

Tuk has not been given the sort of exposure nationally that merengue has in the Dominican Republic, and it has rarely been played on radio. Indeed Elombe Mottley wrote that when he tried to play tuk on CBC radio in Barbados in the late 1960s he was 'reported to the programme manager for playing "a bunch of noise and foolishness"' and that he was 'deemed a madman'.[278] Neither has tuk been widely accepted by all classes of Barbadians, nor could its associated dances, those of the Landship, be compared with the Latin dances, as they are not social dances and are not suitable, or meaningful, outside of the Landship context.

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[278] 'Bumbatuk music and calypso', *Daily Nation*, 1 September 1997. Clipping found in Tuk file at Barbados Museum Library, page number not given.
'When Banja play, people come', *Daily Nation*, 16 July 1999, p. 14.

Barbados has a wealth of music and though it is not essential to have a home-grown music to represent the national culture, it helps to establish that culture and puts a stamp on the identity of its people. If tuk is not to be the music that represents Barbados, then something else will creep into that role, possibly something non-Barbadian. There is already plenty of confusion over Caribbean identities and a general misconception on the part of outsiders, notably those who have never been to the Caribbean, about its size and the variety of countries. I have often been asked by people, wondering how my research is progressing, 'have you been to Jamaica lately?' I have to remind them that it is in fact Barbados I visit for fieldwork. A common reply is that 'it's near enough isn't it?', to which I respond with the comment that they are a good thousand miles apart, and that though both in the Caribbean, they are very different countries. As discussed in the Introduction, p. 2, the Caribbean is a large geographical region with a wide range of diversity in all respects.

The concept of tuk being put forward as the indigenous music of Barbados is reasonable enough, though to expect the nation to adopt tuk and be proud of it as their national music is ambitious. The fact that tuk is promulgated as Barbados' indigenous music and is showcased for visitors will contribute in some way to the perception of tuk by Barbadians. Whether or not this is positive will depend on the individuals' views on tuk, and indeed on visitors.

**Wayne 'Poonka' Willock**

The revival of tuk has been aided by the efforts of some players who have taken up tuk through interest and are helping to regenerate appreciation for it. The key driving force behind the resurgence and recontextualisation of tuk since the 1980s

has been Wayne 'Poonka' Willock, usually known as Poonka, who is synonymous with tuk in Barbados. Mention the word 'tuk' to anyone in Barbados and they will respond with the name Poonka. Everyone in Barbados I have spoken to about tuk has told me I should talk to him. During my last couple of field trips, I always included the fact that I have been working with Willock since 1997 when introducing myself to anyone new and explaining about my research. Willock is recognised as the authority on tuk because of his long-standing commitment to its cause. He has also made his efforts high profile, and involved people in the highest walks of life of Barbados in his mission.

Photograph 17: Poonka[279]

Willock recalls the fascination of hearing the tuk band as a child and it was this that started his involvement in tuk. As discussed earlier, p. 183, the older musicians were not keen to teach anyone tuk. Willock therefore taught himself by

[279] Photograph taken by John Meredith, Bridgetown Port, 22 February 2001.

observation and experimentation. In 1979 he appeared at Carifesta in Cuba playing the kittle drum.[280] By that time he had taught himself to play the other tuk instruments.[281] From starting out as an amateur percussionist and calypsonian, he set about incorporating tuk into his performances, started a tuk band and has been instrumental in promoting tuk in Barbados and beyond.

One result of these efforts has been the instigation of tuk workshops by the National Cultural Foundation. These were intended to introduce children to tuk and were extremely popular. Similar workshops were put on for other activities such as stilt walking. Willock is now the co-ordinator of a scheme known as Cultural and Historical Exposure for Kids in Schools (CHEKS), which will be discussed later in this chapter, pp. 212-8.

**Tuk in other musics**

During the early 1980s Willock experimented with fusing tuk with calypso, taking the bass rhythms and putting them into the bass parts for the calypso band. One example of this is his 1983 calypso, *Tuk Band Rhythm*, which can be heard on Track 9 of the accompanying CD. In another song, *Tuk in me head*, he questions the listener whether he should 'use foreign beat instead' of 'the beat that belong to we', thus challenging the listener to consider what would be better about 'a foreign beat' to an indigenous one. *Tuk in me head* can be heard on Track 10 of the CD.

[280] Carifesta is the Caribbean Festival of the Creative Arts which is held in different Caribbean countries at irregular intervals. It is not a traditional festival but one developed to promote activity in the region to help develop Caribbean identity as well as providing opportunities for the arts and culture of the participants to be put on show.
[281] De-Jane Gibbons, 'Tuk Music here to stay', Barbados Advocate, 8 August 1997 (printed from Advocate computer, no page number available).

Certainly this is a valid question and one that could be applied to many foreign things used instead of local ones.[282]

Willock has also done some experimentation with sampling the sound of the triangle and putting that into a song. The early experiments helped revive interest in tuk and inspired other people to experiment with fusing tuk and other musics. In 1996, calypsonian Bert 'Panta' Browne used some tuk elements in a Crop Over song which made it into the Radio Caribbean Top 20. He called his fusion ring-tuk, also based on tuk rhythms fused with elements of calypso, but this was a short-lived venture.[283]

One music that includes elements of tuk is ringbang, which was created by Eddy Grant, the Guyanese musician and record producer who owns Ice Records in Barbados. It also draws influences from a range of Caribbean musics including soca and dancehall.[284] There has been debate over the heavy use of tuk rhythms in ringbang, so much so that Willock believes that the two are actually the same. He goes to great lengths to point this out in his song *De Scam* (Track 11 on the accompanying CD) in which he laments the supposed difference between the two, saying 'listen to tuk', then you hear a short phrase followed by 'listen to ringbang' and the same short phrase is repeated. This continues in several variations before he challenges the listener 'Can you see any difference?', going on to say, 'I call that the same difference'.[285] This controversy reared up in 1994 and by 1996 Willock was suggesting that people 'openly accepted it [tuk], even though under

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[282] Both tracks are taken from Poonka's album *Best of Poonka – King of Tuk* (1996), and are reproduced by kind permission of Wayne Willock.
[283] 'Panta: None of That', *Barbados Advocate*, 26 July 1996, p. 18.
[284] For examples of ringbang listen to: Various Artistes, *Ringbang Carnival Special 96* (Ice Records, RDRC-2379, 1996); Various Artistes, *Ringbang Rebel Dance* (Ice Records, 951902, 1995).
[285] *De Scam* is also on Poonka's album *Best of Poonka – King of Tuk* (1996), and is reproduced by kind permission of Wayne Willock.

the guise of ring-bang'.[286] According to Best 'there is a school of thought that believes Grant is appropriating tuk in the name of ringbang'.[287]

Different people have different opinions about ringbang, but in reality it cannot be said that tuk and ringbang are the same thing. They may well share some rhythms, however the styles of the music, not to mention their mediums of performance are different. Best considers that ringbang is more a way of life than just a rhythm and that it employs a variety of 'regional, cultural-specific texts within a re-configured mode'.[288]

However, ringbang seems to have disappeared off the main Barbadian music scene, perhaps itself absorbed within other Barbadian musics. By the time of my first field trip in 1997 it seemed to have been almost forgotten. People mentioned ringbang to me in relation to tuk, drawing attention to the argument that Willock had with Grant, but there was no evidence of it being a current musical form. Adisa Andwele told me 'what is being called soca music is really ringbang music from Barbados but because of the controversies Barbadian musicians never claimed the music as theirs'.[289] The only obvious reference I found to ringbang was a magazine entitled *Ringbang* published in Barbados, claiming to be the magazine of Caribbean music, rather than about the musical form itself. Even that was short-lived – only two issues were published.[290]

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[286] De-Jane Gibbons, 'Wayne 'Poonka' Willock reflects on his career – 30 years on the scene', *Barbados Advocate*, 17 May 1996, p. 19.
[287] *Barbadian Popular Music and the Politics of Caribbean Culture* , p. 116.
[288] Ibid., p. 116.
[289] Interview, 14 February 2001.
[290] Adisa Andwele, the editor of *Ringbang*, told me this was because they did not have the necessary infrastructures to survive as an international magazine. Interview, 14 February 2001.

I believe the main tuk influence in ringbang is the use of the ♩. ♪ ♩ ♩ bass tuk rhythm. Based on evidence of perceptions of tuk, it is hard to accept that artistes of popular music would want to associate themselves with something undesirable to their audience such as something taken from tuk. However, I believe this rhythm is a Barbadian musical heartbeat and that tuk rhythms are somehow deep-rooted in Barbadian psyches. What seems to have happened is that the tuk rhythms have, consciously or otherwise, been incorporated into ringbang but have undergone some change in the recording studio. Sampling and processing sounds gives a different feeling to music, contrasting dramatically with live acoustic instruments. The use of one or two rhythms or other facets of a musical style in another does not mean that music has assumed the identity of the music it borrows from.

In some ringbang music it is possible to hear the bass tuk beat or a booming bass, which could be considered to be tuk influence, for example in *Jump in de ring-bang tide* by Adisa and *Ringa Ringa ring-bang* by Viking Tundah.[291] Others refer to tuk in the lyrics, for example in *Ringbang Music* performed by Calypso Rose – the lyrics say 'I hearing de iron and de bass drum', presumably alluding to the steel and bass drum of the tuk band.[292] In Square One's *Ruk-a-tuk Party* the lyrics allude to ring bang, but the hook line of the song is 'Ruk-a-tuk'. One line says 'You know I like tuk, say what you like'. This is an interesting subject for a song performed by one of the bands at the forefront of Barbadian popular music. Whether or not this was an intentional attempt to give tuk some sort of approval, it nevertheless put a form of tuk into a different marketplace with a different audience. The very fact the lyrics say 'say what you like' about someone liking

[291] These songs can be found on Various Artistes, *Fire in De Wave* (Ice Records, 941502: 1994).
[292] On Various Artistes, *Ringbang Carnival Special '96* (Ice Records, RDRC2379: 1996).

tuk, suggests that it is well known that tuk is looked down upon but that if someone likes tuk they should not be afraid to let it be known. The song also says 'this kind of music is there for years' as if drawing attention to the fact that tuk is an established music in Barbados. It is also suggested that 'soca is what confusing the teenager; their education is in decline; because this music corrupt their mind'. Again, an interesting viewpoint expressed by this band, considering they are widely accepted as a soca band, and this is the only time I have heard it suggested that soca is a corrupting influence on youth. Later on we are told that 'ringbang come to educate' and 'the ringbang rhythm to show you class'. [293]

Ringbang is, however, not just about music. Grant sees people wearing ringbang hats and shirts, and playing ringbang at a variety of social occasions. He says it is 'a youth-oriented life-style to include a totally original work, sound and stated philosophy'.[294] In an interview given to the *Sunday Times* in 2001, for which he wore 'a Ringbang denim jacket, a Ringbang T-shirt and a Ringbang belt', Grant stated that philosophy to be 'that we should love ourselves, that we should buy what we create so we can retain our dignity'.[295]

Whatever musical elements appear in both, it is clear that tuk and ringbang are two different musical genres and have different, specific roles to play in Barbadian culture.

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[293] On Various Artistes, *Fire in De Wave* (Ice Records, 941502: 1994).
[294] Best, *Barbadian Popular Music,* pp. 102, 104 and XI - Eddy Grant, Foreword written 21 April 1998.
[295] Rachel Cooke, 'Grant Aided', *Sunday Times (Style Magazine)*, 27 May 2001, pp. 8-9. For the official version of 'Ringbang Culture' visit www.icerecords.com/RINGBANG.HTM

## Tuk in the Crop Over Festival

The inclusion in the annual Crop Over festival of a tuk band competition has been one small step to raise tuk's profile (the history and development of Crop Over will be discussed fully in Chapter 4, pp. 280-4). This competition started in 1986 and offers an opportunity for the bands to perform in public and compete for prize money.

Although it is part of a huge festival, the tuk competition is relegated to a fairly small window on a weekend afternoon on a temporary stage as a sort of sideshow to the Bridgetown Market. This is a two day event where you can buy all manner of things Barbadian – fried chicken, fish cakes, Banks' beer, jewellery, wood carving and so on. By contrast the calypso competitions take place in large venues such as the National Stadium where the music is the focal point, the food and beer stalls are secondary. The tuk competition was originally held early on Sunday afternoons, but due to requests from some of the bands, it was moved to 3 p.m. on a Saturday in 1998 in an effort to ensure a larger audience. David Headley, one member of the winning band in 1998, told me that there were more people than usual that year – in some previous years they had performed only to the judges and the friends and families of the bands.[296] Despite this success however, the competition has been moved back to the Sunday afternoon of the same event, which is not considered a good move because Cohobblopot takes place that evening at the National Stadium.[297] What this means is that people might leave the Bridgetown Market early in the afternoon to go home and rest and prepare before the evening event, thus the potential audience might be significantly reduced.

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[296] Conversation at tuk competition, 1 August 1998

[297] Interview with Rosemary Straughn, Operations Manager of Rotherley Construction, corporate sponsors of tuk, 19 February 2001.

Staging the tuk competition in a venue where there was proper audience seating rather than just a piece of ground in front of the stage would be an improvement. It is questionable however whether if it was staged as anything other than a sideshow at a larger event, there would be very much of an audience (excepting the bands' families and friends). So it is a question of making the best out of a less than ideal situation. Certainly to stage the tuk competition as an event in its own right would not seem to be a good idea. Thus moving the competition away from the bustle of the Bridgetown Market would seem to be the best option, still as part of a bigger event, but away from the blasting of other musics from huge speakers at some of the market stalls, which is not conducive to a competition setting. Rosemary Straughn recalls that it was better in the early years of the competition when it was held at the Garrison as part of an event called Pang-a-Lang.[298]

The tuk competition serves an important purpose in bringing together the bands and offering them a chance to compete against each other, and since 1998 has included a junior tuk competition for youth bands, the advent of which will be discussed in the next section. The competition is also significant because it is an opportunity for the bands to perform to a Barbadian audience - most tuk bands today perform at shows staged for tourists where the only locals are the hotel staff. It is regrettable therefore that in 2002 the competition was cancelled due to controversy surrounding the participation of Ruk-a-Tuk International. According to Willock, other bands believe that if his band participate, they will automatically win.[299]

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[298] Interview, 19 February 2001.
[299] Personal correspondence, 19 August 2002.

Unfortunately comprehensive records of participants and winners of the competition have not been kept. I have made numerous enquiries at the National Cultural Foundation for such information, to be told it does exist but that I will have to ask someone else. Inevitably when I ask that someone else, they refer me on to yet another person. I have, however, through my research and with Willock's assistance, managed to compile a list of the winning bands, which reveals that only four bands have ever won – Bandits is the former name of Ruk-a-Tuk International. For a full list of bands see p. 182.

1986 Troubadours International
1987 Bandits
1988 Troubadours International
1989 Bandits
1990 Ruk-a-Tuk International
1991 Troubadours International
1992 Black Pudding
1993 Ruk-a-Tuk International
1994 Ruk-a-Tuk International
1995 Ruk-a-Tuk International
1996 Ruk-a-Tuk International
1997 Ruk-a-Tuk International
1998 Black Pudding
1999 Ruk-a-Tuk International
2000 Ruk-a-Tuk International
2001 Salt Fish Soup

Willock told me that the runners up each year would have been either Troubadours, Black Pudding or Ruk-a-Tuk, except for one year when Troubadours did not participate and he remembers Saltfish Soup were one of the runners-up. Willock says some of the bands simply go to have a few drinks, play a little, then to carry on drinking and pick up the band's appearance fee of BDS $250-300 (approximately £80-100).[300] Certainly, before and after the competition certain bands could be seen propping up the drinks stalls.

[300] Conversation, 20 February 2001.

The prize money for winning the competition is not large. In 1998 it was BDS $1200 (approximately £400) and that has to be split between the four members of the band. It is certainly not enough of a financial incentive to be the only reason for taking part in the competition, so obviously the appearance fees must help. Members of the junior tuk bands are also paid appearance fees, no doubt this is seen as an incentive for young people to give up their time and perform. In 1999 each member was paid BDS $50 (approximately £17). Some of the pupils play in more than one band and receive an appearance fee for each band they appear in. Each band has to perform a piece in each of the three tuk speeds, the fassie or march, the waltz, and tuk. Some of the bands bring along extras in the form of a tiltman or some Landship members to dance, but these are more for the audience than the judges who have their judging criteria to adhere to. Points are awarded for the following:

| | |
|---|---|
| Arrangement | 25 |
| Originality | 25 |
| Creativity/Quality | 20 |
| Flute | 20 |
| Presentation | 10 |

The flute player, as can be seen from the points available, has a lot of responsibility.

When I attended the competition in 1998, I was interested to see that no one of note attends – either from the National Cultural Foundation or any government ministers, which is strange considering the supposed importance attached to tuk. This is in contrast to Cohobblopot in 1998, which was attended by the Barbadian Prime Minister. I am not however surprised considering the attitude of some people towards tuk. Rosemary Straughn told me that no one from the National

Cultural Foundation attends, and that little importance is attached to the competition, so what I saw was the norm.[301] However, John Gilmore told me that when he worked for the National Cultural Foundation (1986-90) he, and another Cultural Officer did attend.[302]

An attempt at increasing tuk's profile was announced in 1999 saying that a national tuk orchestra would be in place by Crop Over the following year.[303] Unfortunately this did not happen. An interesting development in the public image of tuk occurred at Crop Over in 2001. Aubrey Gittens, the tuk drum maker, was awarded a 'Crop-Over Stalwart Award' for 'continued excellence in the development of the tuk band as a musical force in Barbados'.[304] Given the general attitude towards tuk in Barbados, discussed earlier, pp. 189-93, and its low profile on the Crop Over programme, this was a major contribution to raising tuk's profile in the festival.

**Commercial Sponsorship**

As in other areas of entertainment, commercial sponsorship is playing an increasingly significant role in the preservation and development of tuk. Unlike more popular musical forms such as calypso, tuk does not attract international companies as sponsors, and the sponsorship tends to be in a different form. Calypsonians can expect to enjoy the benefits of international companies such as Kentucky Fried Chicken and British American Tobacco (using their Embassy brand name) sponsoring events and putting up large sums of money for prizes at competitions. Tuk bands however tend to be sponsored by much smaller,

[301] Interview, 19 February 2001.
[302] Conversation, 14 May 2002.
[303] 'Tuk Orchestra Coming' *Barbados Advocate*, 5 July 1999.
[304] 'Honours for Three', *Daily Nation* Online, 20 July 2001.

Barbadian companies and might receive sponsorship in the form of instruments or clothing bearing the sponsors' logo rather than actual cash.

The biggest sponsor of tuk in Barbados is Rotherley Construction, a large building company who see this sponsorship as their contribution to the preservation of part of Barbados' heritage. They currently sponsor Rotherley Ruk-a-Tuk International, Barbados' foremost tuk band led by Willock, and a schools tuk band. The company name appears on the band's drums, on their shirts, and whenever they are introduced, they are always called by their full name. The company also sponsors tuk workshops for young people, which have been run in association with the National Cultural Foundation, although the company now liaise directly with Willock on these and distribute the funding directly where it is needed.

In 1998, Rosemary Straughn, Operations Manager of Rotherley Construction said:

> It is imperative that our young people see and learn to appreciate the various aspects of Barbadian culture. These are the things that brought us to this point and our full understanding of our culture will take us forward.[305]

In 2001 I interviewed Straughn about the firm's sponsorship of tuk. As well as wanting to sponsor something that was totally Barbadian, they felt that putting money into tuk would help identify them as 'a totally Barbadian company'. Rotherley is run by a white Barbadian family and Straughn said that they wanted to be seen as Barbadians 'because there is still a thing that white people aren't Barbadian, but we are all born and bred here, and consider ourselves Barbadian'.[306] I asked if there was some sort of return they were hoping for from

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[305] 'Junior Tuk', *Daily Nation* Online, 3 April 1998.

[306] For a discussion of black and white identity in post-Independence Barbados see Peter Laurie and Val McComie, 'Race, Culture and Barbadian Identity: Our African Heritage in Creole Context', in *Banja: A Magazine of Barbadian Life and Culture*, 4 (1989), 22-9. In 2001, Barbadian journalist

the sponsorship, other than the obvious one of having their name on instruments, promotional material and Ruk-a-Tuk's shirts. Straughn replied that they were not looking for a return but feel that their employees can relate to the fact that the company is sponsoring tuk and appreciate seeing some money going 'back where it belongs with the people'.[307]

The sponsorship has taken various forms. One year the Junior Tuk band competition was funded, and though they were prepared to do so the following year, the National Cultural Foundation failed to approach them in this respect. Rotherley have also paid for the production of promotional leaflets, car stickers, band costumes, travel expenses and assisted with the launch of a CD. They did not, until 2001, sponsor the main tuk band competition because of the conflict of interest with their sponsorship of Ruk-a-Tuk International. In 2001 the band were requested not to take part in the competition as Rotherley were sponsoring it, and were instead paid to appear as guest performers.[308]

I asked if a certain percentage of the company's budget was allocated to this sponsorship each year. It seems that Willock asks for what is needed and they help out wherever possible rather than fixing a set sum as they did originally. This is the only sponsorship they undertake. They may make donations to charities and so on, but nothing else receives their regular commitment.

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Carol Martindale wrote that white Barbadians 'say they feel marginalised because the country is dominated by Blacks who are shaping the national identity based on their African heritage'. She was reporting on the findings contained in the Report of The Committee for National Reconciliation which stated that white Barbadians 'are concerned about their place and role in a society where black Barbadians hold political power and are proceeding to define the country's national identity in terms and symbols that purport to make a clean break with colonial antecedents and reflect for the first time emphasis on the African heritage of the national community'. 'White Fears', *Daily Nation* Online, 15 April 2001.

[307] Interview, 19 February 2001.

[308] Personal communication with Willock, 5 September 2001.

Other companies or organisations that sponsor tuk are smaller concerns. The largest of these is Purity Bakeries, which sponsored the 1998 tuk band competition at which at least two of the bands wore Purity T-shirts. Another band was named 'Tony's Snack Bar Black Pudding' with the name embroidered on their polo shirts. Willock says other sponsors have pulled out of competition sponsorship because of how they have been treated, presumably by the organisers rather than the bands themselves.[309]

## TUK IN EDUCATION TODAY

Music is a standard part of the education curriculum today, although to what extent it includes Caribbean music is variable. For example, lessons at Harrison College, one of the elite schools in Barbados, include music theory, playing the recorder, singing (including Caribbean songs) and history of music.[310] At one secondary school, the Alleyne School, tuk is used as the basis for all the teaching material in music.[311]

## Cultural and Historical Exposure for Kids in Schools – 'CHEKS'

The popularity of the tuk workshops organised by the National Cultural Foundation and run by Willock seem to have been the precursor for the implementation of a cultural heritage programme, which was piloted in a number of primary and secondary schools in 1999 and of which Willock is in overall charge. The purpose of this scheme is to ensure that all young Barbadians grow up with an awareness of, and an appreciation for, their cultural heritage. The Barbadian Government is

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[309] Comment made during my interview with Rosemary Straughn with Willock present, 19 February 2001.
[310] I spent a day at Harrison College with Janice Millington, the Head of Music, interviewing her and observing music lessons, 2 December 1997. Millington is a well-known classical musician in Barbados.
[311] Interview with Derry Atkins, Music Teacher, 22 February 2001.

greatly concerned that many young Barbadians readily adopt aspects of North American culture, yet are seemingly ignorant of their own country's. A Senior Education Officer at the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture told me that these types of programmes are also important for children who are not academically successful, but who may excel in other areas of the curriculum. She suggested that these programmes can bring the children 'more in touch with themselves [...] in terms of talents and skills which they might have which might fall outside academics'. The long-term plan is to instigate assessment and award certificates for achievement in these areas. During the same meeting I raised the question of parental acceptance of such schemes. I was assured that there had been no difficulties, even from the schools considered to be the most prestigious. In fact the scheme seemed to be so popular that there were too many children to accommodate on it.[312]

There are however some prejudices despite the scheme being so successful and acceptance of the scheme in schools has not been as smooth as made out by the Ministry of Education. At some schools Willock has experienced problems with lack of organisation, maybe due to an unwillingness to have the scheme in the school. He recalled the case of one school where the principal said she didn't want the Landship or tuk band, but didn't mind the stilt walking. Willock says he pointed out that was what the Ministry of Education stipulated, but she was adamant that the Ministry could not tell her how to run her school. Willock was obliged to involve the Ministry in the debate and he has since been able to run the scheme fully in that school. At one of the elite secondary schools lack of organisation (believed to be at least partially intentional) meant that it was week

[312] Interview with Ellsworth Young, Permanent Secretary; Andrea Gollop-Greenidge, Administrative Officer – Culture; and Idamay Denny, Senior Education Officer – Curriculum, Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 18 February 1999.

four by the time any children actually attended a session.[313] Undoubtedly some disorganisation is due to the enormous pressures on principals and teachers to do so many jobs besides actually teaching.

Willock told me that it would take three years to complete a circuit of every school in the country. Each school has a ten-week programme of tuk, stilt walking and Landship dancing for a number of pupils from one year group, and at the end of the programme a presentation is put on for the whole school. Willock told me that the primary schools are more receptive to the scheme than secondary schools and suggested this is no doubt due in part to the different set-up in secondary schools as well as their comparative size that often makes communication and organisation less efficient.[314] There is always concern about pupils missing academic lessons, particularly in years leading up to public examinations even though CHEKS lessons are intended to be timetabled during physical education lessons.

Children participating in the scheme that I have interviewed seem generally positive and keen about tuk. The most common answer when I asked what they really liked about their tuk sessions was that they enjoyed playing the drums. Many of them consider playing the drums easy and claim to practice in between formal sessions, though judging from the reprimands they were receiving for not getting rhythms correct, how often and how well is debatable. I was curious to know what sort of response the children had from home about these sessions, and learning tuk drumming in particular. They all said that it was thought to be

[313] Comment made during my interview with Rosemary Straughn, 19 February 2001.
[314] Conversation, 1 May 2000.

acceptable or good, and one ten year old said his mother thought it was good that he could become a famous person like Poonka.[315]

Photograph 18: Pupils at Christ Church Girls' Primary School rehearsing tuk[316]

Ife Wilkinson, one of the tutors on the CHEKS scheme, believes it is important to instil in children a positive attitude towards Barbadian culture and try and turn around the leaning towards a culture based on television and violence. He told me that since the scheme started it had become acceptable to go and teach tuk, stilt walking and Landship dancing in normal school hours, before then they had to be extra-curricular activities.[317] Wilkinson receives sponsorship from the international company Texaco for training stilt walkers. This is part of their commitment to developing arts that are disappearing in the countries they operate in.[318]

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[315] Pupils interviewed at Christ Church Boys' Primary and Christ Church Girls' Primary Schools, 21 February 2001; St Alban's School, 22 February 2001.
[316] Photograph taken by Sharon Meredith, 21 February 2001.
[317] Interview 22 February 2001. Wilkinson is best known as a stilt walker and has trained many of Barbados' stilt walkers. He also plays and teaches tuk drums.
[318] Kay Donawa, Local Representative for Texaco, 21 February 2001.


Photograph 19: Landship dancing and stilt walking at Christ Church Girls' Primary School[319]

Teachers and principals that I interviewed about the scheme are enthusiastic about it. They believe it is beneficial to the children in terms of learning something about their cultural heritage as well as engaging in non-academic activity. A desire to see the scheme extended to run through the school year was expressed, though one principal was cautious about the amount of time that would be lost to other curriculum subjects. She acknowledged however that in a ten-week programme what often happens is that children get a taste for the activity, and then if there is no continuation once the scheme has run its course, the enthusiasm can die out.[320] I asked whether any parents had objected to their child participating in the scheme. With the exception of one who apparently thought her child would miss out on too much class work, parents seem to be at least accepting the scheme. As another principal pointed out 'that's part of the

[319] Photograph taken by Sharon Meredith, 21 February 2001. The banner is being held in the background because Texaco had sent a photographer to take photographs for the company's global magazine.
[320] Heather Bryan, Principal of Christ Church Girls' Primary School, 21 February 2001.

curriculum to be able to expose children not only to bookwork but to other activities as well'.[321]

Photograph 20: A Landship dancing lesson at Christ Church Boys' Primary School[322]

Photograph 21: Pupils rehearsing with tuk drummers seen in background[323]

[321] Oliver Gibbs, St Alban's Primary School, 22 February 2001.
[322] Photograph taken by Sharon Meredith, 21 February 2001.
[323] Photograph taken by Sharon Meredith at Christ Church Boys' Primary School, 21 February 2001.

The problem that has arisen, and which needs addressing if the scheme is to continue being successful, is the lack of suitably trained teachers to deliver and reinforce the scheme. At the moment, once the specialist team have moved on from a school the scheme effectively stops. Without training teachers in schools so they have the confidence and knowledge to continue teaching the children, there can be no continuation of the scheme and what the children have learned in the ten weeks is likely to be lost. Teachers in Barbados, like teachers elsewhere, are already laden down with work without the CHEKS scheme, so there is an urgent need for the Government to address this problem as tuk's role in education today has an important role to play in the future of tuk.

**Instrument making workshops**

A further effort to encourage tuk activity was tuk band instrument making workshops. I sat in on one of the planning meetings for these in 2001 when it was decided that five two-hour Saturday afternoon sessions would be held, making them accessible for all ages, not just children.[324] These workshops were to be run by Ife Wilkinson who has learned the art of drum making from Aubrey Gittens, the only traditional tuk drum maker in Barbados (who was discussed earlier, p. 142). Wilkinson is developing making the drums in the traditional shape and size but using slightly different materials, such as a patent skin rather than animal skin. He also suggested that he was developing a drum that would be easier to repair, presumably thinking of the efforts of over-zealous children beating on the skins.[325]

[324] Meeting between Rosemary Straughn and Wayne Willock, 19 February 2001.
[325] Interview, 22 February 2001.

## SUMMARY

Changes in twentieth century society were significant with the decline of the sugar industry and the advent of tourism alongside an increased awareness of the right of equal status for the black population. Traditional ways and activities gave way to new technology and imported ideas, often because these appeared more glamorous and were perceived to give the participator increased status in the eyes of his peers. Radio and television in particular brought in a new way of life and opened up opportunities for people to see and hear a wide range of music amongst many other things, often in their own homes, thus diminishing the need for community-based entertainment.

Partly due to the post-Independence moves to promulgate and re-establish the heritage of the black population, tuk has gradually acquired an air of respectability about it and has slowly become accepted by those who might once have derided it and its performers. It is not, however, universally accepted by all Barbadians. Official events now seem to call for a tuk band, particularly where there are foreign dignitaries present. The fact that some of the more prestigious hotels in Barbados such as Rockley Beach Resort and the Barbados Hilton employ tuk bands as part of their cultural shows for their guests reflects the acceptance of tuk. After all the hotels would not want their guests offended in any way or being subjected to something undesirable. Certainly none of the tourists I have interviewed have made any negative comments about tuk. As I would expect, some were more enthusiastic than others, but overall it is received favourably.

What is certain now is that tuk has an established, respectable part to play in Barbadian life, albeit not necessarily for everyone. No doubt some of this is down

to Wayne Willock's efforts to promote tuk and re-establish it in Barbadian culture. He must be credited for his significant efforts and success at taking tuk into different venues and incorporating it into calypso. He has also been a key figure in getting the CHEKS scheme up and running in schools and it seems this is a scheme that will be a firmly established part of the national curriculum for the foreseeable future. The introduction of tuk into schools as part of the CHEKS scheme is symbolic as well as practical. The Government is seen to be preserving and promoting the culture of Barbados and the instigation of such a scheme incorporating every school in the country whilst children are getting hands on experience of their cultural heritage as well as learning its background, is a positive move.

The activities of the National Cultural Foundation (which will be discussed further in Chapter 4, pp. 253-4) to raise tuk's profile have also made an important contribution, especially with the organisation and running of tuk workshops. However the long term future for tuk is uncertain. Yes, there is plenty being done to teach the youth of today but it is not enough to guarantee the future, and who is not to say that should Government policy change, that the CHEKS scheme will not be abandoned in favour of something else. Then it will be up to the tuk bands to train the next generation.

The establishment of the tuk band competition at Crop Over was an important move for the tuk bands as it gives them a focus for preparing themselves to compete against each other, which should in theory raise standards. Despite its success, the competition has not been given a high profile and has been moved to

a slot on the Crop Over calendar where the competition enjoyed less success. This suggests that tuk does not enjoy stability outside its role in tourism.

Commercial sponsorship is undoubtedly invaluable for tuk and has contributed significantly with workshops, provision of instruments, promotional materials and staging of events. Other art forms are sponsored so it is not unrealistic that tuk should be also. Rotherley Construction has made a great contribution to tuk's preservation and promotion, and seems likely to continue to do so.

The future of tuk seems to rest strongly with its recontextualised format and in the hands of a small group of people. Certainly as the older generation of players die out there will be no one left who has played tuk in its original format in its once prime venue, the rum shop. The biggest regular demand for tuk bands now comes from the hotels and there is no reason to think there is no long-term future for this, presumably as long as tourism continues to be a major industry, the demand for tuk bands to participate in the cultural shows staged for the tourists will continue. It may not be a traditional representation of tuk, but is one that has moved on to a different performance level. The alternative whereby tuk is only performed in its traditional setting in its traditional format seems to mean a certain death for tuk. Tuk has been recontextualised to serve a purpose that fits in with modern society. Despite the disapproval of this by some of the older players, this is the future for tuk.

# Chapter 3

# THE BARBADOS LANDSHIP

## INTRODUCTION

There exists in Barbados a notable cultural phenomenon – the Barbados Landship, which has been the subject of a number of articles, many of which are referenced in this chapter. Whilst these articles make reference to the tuk band's relationship with the Landship, this is the first study to explore that relationship and suggest reasons for it.

The Landship's members make public appearances presenting nautically inspired drills to the music of a tuk band. Photograph 22 below shows the Landship performing on stage in a modern context.[1]

Photograph 22

Though not a widespread activity as it once was, the Landship today is considered to present an important facet of Barbadian culture to the country's visitors, and many high-profile events and official functions feature a performance by the

[1] Photograph taken by John Meredith at Oistins Fish Festival, 24 April 2000.

Landship. While its exact origins are unclear, there is a popular account of its origins, which is widely advocated as its true history. The theme varies slightly according to whom you speak or where you read it, but the main points are the same. As suggested by its name, the Landship is a ship that never goes to sea. It is not physically a ship, but a body of people who meet at a 'dock', dress in naval style uniform, drill in a pseudo-naval style and have naval style ranks.

When the Landship was instigated it may have been widely acceptable for 'Little England', as Barbados was once known, to have its own 'navy' in imitation of its colonial mother country. This would have been important at the time the Landship was created, and has been passed down through the subsequent generations as an accepted tradition, even though it may be perceived to be out of touch with the values of a postcolonial society in the twenty-first century. After all, is the imitation of something so very British as the Royal Navy really relevant to Barbadian society today? Or is mimicry really more relevant in a society free of its colonial masters? It may be that, having for so long lived in the shadow of their colonisers, people of the Caribbean are still what Naipaul described as 'mimic men of the New World'.[2] Today the Landship may be little more than a recreation of the past, something people everywhere are fond of doing through rituals and re-enactments.[3]

Captain Watson, the co-ordinator of all Landship activities for almost thirty years from the early 1970s, had a collection of old Landship records and photographs

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[2] V.S. Naipaul, *The Mimic Men* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1967), p. 175.

[3] For example, the Sealed Knot Society in England recreates the battles of the Civil War. What purpose does this historical re-enactment serve? Some people may like to dress in period costumes and hold mock battles; there may also be lessons to be learned from recreating past events.

but, unfortunately, most of these were lost as a result of a hurricane, so much of what went on before he took over this role is now forgotten.[4]

## Origins and Development

Records do not exist to give an accurate history of the founder, or of the organisation and its early practices, but it is generally believed that the Landship was founded by a retired Barbadian seaman known as Moses Wood or Ward in the 1860s. He had served in the British Royal Navy and on returning to dry land missed the discipline and comradeship of Navy life. He sought to recreate some of this by setting up the Landship, an organisation where people could meet and undertake disciplined drills. In general, Barbadians accept this theory for the founding of the Landship, and if asked, will relate some version of it. The Landship grew in popularity during the late nineteenth century and became an established part of life for much of the black population who constituted the working classes, run by and for them.

Due to the absence of documentary evidence, it is possible to speculate on reasons other than those given above for the founding and purpose of the Landship. One speculation is that it is retaliation for the mockery and inhumane treatment suffered by African slaves on slave ships during the Middle Passage. During the 1840s it is documented that British men-of-war patrolled the West African coast in an effort to stop slaves being shipped.[5] The founder of the Landship may have served on one of these ships and a further interpretation of the Landship could be that it was started in recognition of these ships' efforts to stop

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[4] Interview with Captain Vernon Watson, 3 December 1997. All subsequent references to Captain Watson refer to this interview unless otherwise stated.
[5] John Duncan, *Travels in Western Africa in 1856 & 1846*, 2 vols (London: Richard Bentley, 1847), I, 115.

slaving. The Landship may also have served to fill the gap left by the disappearance of the militia, which declined from the time of Emancipation and had totally disappeared by the late 1860s.[6] It could also have started as a straightforward imitation of colonial ways in the belief that these were in fact superior to local ones, and were therefore a vehicle for social improvement.

**Membership**

Due to the lack of records, comprehensive membership details are not known. Sir Clyde Gollop, the Landship Patron, suggests that in the 1920s there would have been sixty or seventy Landships, but after that numbers decreased.[7] In the 1930s it is said there were more than sixty ships with three thousand men and eight hundred women members.[8] Lynch, however, says that in 1932 over thirty Landships existed, enough to warrant the movement publishing its own magazine.[9] Another suggestion is that there were twenty-four Landships launched in the early 1930s.[10] Whatever the precise numbers were in the 1930s however, during World War II and in the post-war years the Landship declined and Captain Watson told me that by 1956 there were only six Landship members. Numbers grew until the 1970s when the Barbados Landship Association was formed by amalgamating the Landships that remained. Captain Watson recalls that when he joined in 1971, there were four ships, which increased to five by 1974, with a total membership of around seven hundred. Sizes of individual Landships varied, some only had twenty members, others may have had as many as eighty. By 1991 it

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[6] The militia disappeared because there was no need for it after Emancipation, and a police force had been established in 1835. Henry Fraser et al., *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage* (Kingston: Heinemann Caribbean, 1990), p. 111 and 135.
[7] Interview, 2 May 2000. All subsequent references to Sir Clyde refer to this interview.
[8] Aviston D. Downes, 'Sailing from Colonial into National Waters: A History of the Barbados Landship', *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society*, 46 (2000), 93-122 (p. 111).
[9] Louis Lynch, *The Barbados Book* (London: Andrew Deutsch, 1964), p. 223.
[10] Anon., 'Barbados Land Ship (B.L.S.)', *Barbados Communicator*, (1973), pp. 10-1.

was reported there were only sixty active members in total.[11] In 1997 Captain Watson said there were around a hundred members, though only about thirty-five active ones.

**Organisation and Uniform**

The names of the ships reflect the names of British warships or are named after the heroes of military campaigns, such as the *Rodney*, named after Admiral Rodney, famous for his victory at the Battle of the Saints (north of Dominica) in 1782, and the *Ironduke*, named after the first Duke of Wellington, hero of the Napoleonic wars.[12]

The Landship members are organised as if they were the crew of a ship. At the top of the ranking is the Admiral, then the officers such as Commander, Captain and Chief Engineer, and at the bottom the ratings, and all conventions of rank are observed. According to Downes, one rank was that of Kittle Major, presumably referring to the kittle player of the accompanying tuk band.[13] This rank may be a parallel with the Drum Major in an army band.

Traditionally only men were members, but after World War I women were allowed to join as nurses and are sometimes known as 'stars', a term connected with Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association.[14] Male members of the Landship dress in naval style uniforms. Female members dress in nurses' uniforms. Some members wear a khaki colour uniform, referred to by Bernard as

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[11] Wayne Lewis, 'Ship ahoy, with a Bajan crew', *The New Bajan*, (1991), 16-20 (p. 17).
[12] John Gilmore, *The Barbados Landship Association* (Barbados: The National Cultural Foundation, 1993), p. 5.
[13] Downes, 'Sailing from Colonial into National Waters', p. 101.
[14] Garvey's organisation had links with the Barbadian Democratic League which founded a working men's association, a co-operative and a friendly society. Ibid., p. 111.
Fraser et al., *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage*, p. 97.
Gilmore, *The Barbados Landship Association*, p. 3.

the 'khaki-clad marines'.[15] In Photograph 23, below, there are three members in such uniforms and carrying what appear to be rifles, or imitation rifles. Unfortunately there is no accreditation for this photograph, though the presence of the Barbadian flag in the background indicates this was taken some time after Independence.[16]

Photograph 23: The Barbados Landship

Photograph 24 below shows the Barbados Landship Association on parade at the Independence Anniversary Parade in 1997, with two members wearing khaki uniforms.[17]

[15] George Bernard, *Wayside Sketches: Pen Pictures of Barbadian Life*, 2nd edn (Barbados: Nation Publishing Company, 1985), p. 17. George Bernard was the pseudonym of Gordon Bell. Fraser et al., ibid., p. 20.
[16] Photograph courtesy of Barbados Government Information Service. The reproduction is not very clear as the original is not very well focussed.
[17] Photograph taken by John Meredith, 1 December 1997.

Photograph 24

As early as 1894 there was official concern about naval and military type uniforms being worn by non-service personnel, and a bill was passed to prevent unofficial wearing of service uniforms. This was not apparently universally well received in Barbados as planters purchased unwanted uniforms (presumably quite cheaply) for their labourers to wear.[18] According to Gilmore, the authorities' disapproval of the Landship's use of naval style uniforms caused the movement to go underground in the early years of the twentieth century.[19] Owen Griffith, who grew up in Barbados in the 1920s and 1930s, attributed the disapproval of the use of naval uniforms to the Colonial Office who believed it was mocking the Royal Navy.[20] Another source suggests that there was a police commissioner who ordered that anyone 'found parading impersonating a member of His Majesty's Navy should be arrested and charged before a magistrate'.[21]

## Landship Activities and Roles

The Landship meet regularly, historically the frequency varying between Landships, at their 'dock', usually a building with a mast on the roof, where, on a

[18] Downes, 'Sailing from Colonial into National Waters', pp. 106-7.
[19] Gilmore, *The Barbados Landship Association*, p. 3.
[20] Interview with Owen Griffith, 27 April 2000. All subsequent references to Mr Griffith refer to this interview.
[21] Anon., 'Barbados Landship (B.L.S.)', p. 11.

weekly basis, they pay their subscriptions. The ship's bell is then rung before the crew are piped onto the main deck to be put through their drill by the Drill Instructor.[22] In practice today, the 'piping on' of the crew usually takes the form of the tuk band playing an introduction to the first piece that is played for the drill.

Permission has to be sought to return to 'land' after they have gone on board. The drill is not the formal military drill that would be recognised by a serviceman, but consists of dances that recreate life on board ship including activities such as cleaning the decks, stoking the boiler, hauling in the anchor and so on, all of which may be made more difficult by how much movement the ship is making, according to Captain Watson:

> whatever we do is an interpretation of whatever happens on the ship. If you look at the 'rough seas' manoeuvre that is the highlight of a parade; you have instances where you are at sea and meet an iceberg or rough weather and it's obvious the ship will rock from side to side, passengers may be thrown over deck, so you have to put them below deck, so we do the same thing.[23]

In the days when there were numerous Landships and they paraded together this may have been perceived to be a sort of Barbadian carnival. Ships would often parade on Sunday afternoons when they would visit neighbouring villages and provide entertainment. Owen Griffith recalls an actual 'ship' being made from sticks and a piece of metal for the funnel, with a fire lit underneath to create smoke, and the Landship would provide the village entertainment for the evening.

In the 1920s they would also go on church parade, doing their drill in the churchyard. Clyde Gollop told me that everyone would try to get to church on the days the Landship were due to parade. During the days before television and

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[22] Lynch, *The Barbados Book*, p. 225
[23] Lewis, 'Ship ahoy, with a Bajan crew', p. 17.

radio, the Landship was an important part of social life for the working classes as rather condescendingly attested by George Bernard, a Barbadian teacher, in 1934 who said that the Landship was 'a powerful social factor in the life of those whom we designate the masses and whom we would not dream of admitting into our clubs'.[24] In other words, the middle and upper classes saw it as a way of keeping the working classes entertained without causing any inconvenience or embarrassment to the rest of the population.

Ships also regularly visited each other, providing opportunities for much ceremonial. The home ship would tow the visiting ship in and the two Admirals would exchange ceremonial greetings before getting down to the serious business of drilling. No doubt there was much rivalry between the ships to see which could turn out the best-attired and drilled crew.

As well as a place for meeting and drilling the Landship also served as a friendly society. During the Landship's early history friendly societies were often aided by the Anglican Church in the early days of their establishment, which meant that members had to follow the rules laid down by the church.[25] At that time Barbadian society was firmly divided by colour and the black workers sought to resist this injustice by setting up their own friendly societies influenced by the Nigerian custom of 'su-su', effectively a method of saving something regularly and when in need being able to call upon what has been saved. This type of arrangement is found elsewhere in the Caribbean, for example in Trinidad and St Lucia. It is also

[24] *Wayside Sketches*, p. 19.
[25] The members were required to live 'what the Church considered to be a moral life' and to show 'due deference to employers'. Fraser et al., *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage*, p. 75.

known by different names in other territories, for example, in Jamaica it is called 'partner'.[26]

By 1946 almost half the population of Barbados were members of the 161 friendly societies in existence (Landships included), numbers that have subsequently declined with social security and other methods of obtaining money when in need.[27] The financial support aspect of the Landship continues today and members are given help when in need, for example when ill or when they need to purchase something for their child's education but are unable to meet the cost. Another important role of the Landship seems to have been its ability to keep people occupied and thereby reducing opportunities for people to fall foul of the law. Captain Watson remembers that there were no evening activities in the villages in the days before television and radio so the Landship offered a place to meet and take part in the drill, as well as, through the regular contributions, providing some form of saving for difficult times. He claims, in a particular area where what he described as 'lawlessness' had crept in among the youth, that when he started up the Landship there, the lawlessness disappeared.

**Demise and Recontextualisation**

There is no evidence to be found in Barbadian newspapers of the late nineteenth century of the Landship's early role, activities and status in Barbadian society. It can be surmised from this that it was of no interest or importance to the upper classes who dominated the production and consumption of newspapers, and that it was the preserve of the black population.

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[26] Fraser et al., *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage*, p. 110.
[27] Ibid., p. 75.

The Landship's demise during the twentieth century can, along with other traditional aspects of culture, partially be attributed to social and economic changes. The advent of new forms of entertainment – radio, television and cinema - provided a choice of things to do in the evenings and other leisure time, and activities that had once played a very important role were no longer needed. The shift in employment from predominantly agriculture to more service based industries, particularly as tourism developed, meant aspirations and values changed and those seeking to improve their status in life undoubtedly shunned what were perceived to be working class activities. The Landship's role as a friendly society was also undermined as with the increase in social security, workers were obliged to contribute to that, and they may not have had the means to continue contributing to the Landship, even if they still wished to do so.

The perception of the Landship by an increasingly aspirant black population may have been a contributing factor in its demise. It was noted in 1934 that the Landship was 'a source of much amusement to the general public'.[28] By that time some of the black population may have been assuming more European ways and starting to look down on what was perceived to be working class culture. If the white population perceived the Landship as an amusement, those who had aspirations in life to better things may have also done so, perhaps mocking those that participated. From serious beginnings, the Landship may well have become a mockery through no fault of its own, but rather as a result of the values imposed on it by society.

[28] Bernard, *Wayside Sketches*, p. 19.

Lynch (1964) describes the average onlooker treating the Landship 'as a joke regarding it as just another manifestation of the love of "the lower-classes" for dazzling uniforms'.[29] I have been interested to note that when the Landship has a mixed audience of tourists and locals, it is the tourists who seemingly take it more seriously. Locals tend to laugh at the manoeuvres performed, in fact I have witnessed people literally doubled up with laughter whilst watching a performance. Captain Watson believes this is because many Barbadians do not value their culture. However, Best suggests that there is an interaction between those performing and the audience. He says 'it is common to see the observer getting into the rhythm and vicariously submerging him or herself within the performance antics of the Landship's crew'.[30]

Despite negative perceptions from the outside, those on the inside took their roles very seriously and the officers in charge drilled the members resolutely – to them the Landship was a major commitment, as it seems to be for the older members today. Members gain status by climbing through the ranks, gaining extra decoration on their uniform, as well as enjoying the privilege of increased knowledge, which is kept from the lower ranks.

Official acceptance of the Landship has increased since it participated in the Federal Pageant held in Barbados to honour the opening of the First Federal Parliament of the West Indies in Trinidad in 1958, and the Independence celebrations in 1966.[31] Since the 1970s the Landship has officially been considered to be an important part of Barbadian culture and during the 1970s the

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[29] Lynch, *The Barbados Book*, p. 224.
[30] Curwen Best, *Barbadian Popular Music and the Politics of Caribbean Culture* rev. edn (Vermont, Schenkman Books, 1999), p. 11.
[31] Programme for The Federal Pageant on 22 April 1958, courtesy of John Gilmore. Gilmore, *The Barbados Landship Association*, p. 4.

Government started subsidising the Landship to help keep it afloat and provide money for uniforms and transportation to events, which ensured that people who wished to be active members could be even if they did not have the financial means to do so. This financial subsidy continues today. A key figure in the Landship is Sir Clyde Gollop, formerly Welfare Officer for Barbados, who became the Landship's Patron in 1971. He was approached to assist in the revival of the organisation because he was a well-known and respected figure of whom people took notice. He worked with Captain Watson and the Landship members to help raise its profile and stop the Landship sinking. This was not an easy task particularly as the older generation of members died and there was a large void to fill.

Today, the Landship often parades at events such as opening ceremonies and Independence Day Parades. On Saturdays from February to September, the Landship is said to go on parade in National Heroes' Square in Bridgetown. This is, according to Captain Watson, a sort of recruitment programme for the Landship as well as a tourist attraction, though on the five occasions when I have gone to watch this, it has never actually taken place, nor have there been any Landship members in sight.

The Landship meets about three times a week, Friday night being the main meeting at which contributions are paid. Many of the members are now too old or infirm to participate in the manoeuvres, however, once a member, you remain a member until you die. Captain Watson told me that he struggled to recruit new members, especially men and that he could recruit about six women to every man.

There are different reasons why members join today. Some junior members I asked told me they liked the dancing, others liked wearing a uniform, and there was some mention of parental influence in the decision. A senior member told me he joined because he liked the activities of the Landship.[32] Most members that turn out for the Landship's performance at events today are teenage girls, a few young children, and a hard core of maybe six adult members who lead and direct the manoeuvres.

The security of being a member of a society that will financially help you out in times of trouble may also be an attractive reason for joining. However for some there may be a reluctance to join because of the historical associations with the working classes, but as the Landship is being recontextualised from a recreational pastime to a performance medium, this should not be so great an issue. Historically some may have joined because they liked to dress in uniform and believed there was some form of status attached to it.

The Landship's profile should gradually be raised now it goes on parade for official functions. Such events offer some opportunity for the Landship members to travel around Barbados and visit places they would not normally go to. High profile events are important for the Landship, particularly when they are reported in the press. For example, 'Cultural activity such as this performance by the Barbados Landship heralded the official opening of the Speightstown Jetty by Prime Minister Owen Arthur.' [33] Putting on a parade somewhere not only puts the Landship in the public eye, but also boosts their funds as they can charge the event organiser. Clyde Gollop told me that there were plans to acquire transport for the Landship as

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[32] Conversations with Landship members, 6 August 1998.
[33] 'Grand Plans for Speightstown', *Daily Nation* Online, 19 November 1998.

this would make it easier for the members to get to events instead of having to rely on public transport. There is also a desire for the Landship to visit every church in Barbados and Gollop told me that he attends all these services as he believes it is important to be seen at such events. This is of course a monumental task considering how many churches there are, and there is only one active Landship which can go, but, nevertheless it is an important regular function for the Landship and for Barbadians to see them, perhaps in a slightly more serious role than they might otherwise do.

The introduction of the cultural heritage programme in schools, which was discussed in Chapter 2, pp. 212-8, is also a significant move for the Landship as part of this teaches Landship dancing to boys and girls.

**Dances**

The actions of the crew are a unique combination of dance and drill actions such as 'side rock' and 'kick astern'. Some steps are reminiscent of the sailor's hornpipe and the quadrille, others such as the wangle low (a limbo-type movement), are said to be derived from African dance. The dances are fairly energetic and often seemingly performed to maximise the stress levels of the Drill Instructor who stands at the front, leading and directing the crew in their movements, blowing a whistle and gesticulating with his stick to try to achieve the changes he desires. To the observer, it appears that the crew are completely oblivious as to which is their right and left, much to the apparent chagrin of the Instructor. I have never seen the Landship perform where all the members looked like they knew what to do and they were, more often than not, moving in contrary motion. This apparently slipshod way of drilling could have developed as a deliberate act, purposely getting things wrong in contrast to the impeccably drilled

sailors and soldiers who might have been encountered in Barbados. Burrowes suggests that it is the 'act of not getting it right, (like the marching step of right hand, right foot), that frees the Landship from the accusation of the mimicry of the colonizer'.[34] Bakhtin suggests that the act of turning something upside down, or back to front is common in the carnivalesque. This may be manifested by the utilisation of an item for something other than its normal use, by the wearing of clothing of the opposite sex or, as could be applied to the Landship, through the movements, which are contrary to those that would be expected of a naval crew.[35] It is entirely possible however that all the crew are not well-drilled and some simply go wrong because they need more practice.

The Landship also perform a Maypole dance, which may be derived from the English traditional dance. The English plantocracy would probably have transplanted at least some of their festivals and the associated traditions to their new home, and the Maypole might well have been one of these. It is not clear why the Landship perform the Maypole dance, but I am told that Maypole dancing with a tuk band existed before the Landship adopted it.[36] It is possible therefore that the Landship simply adopted an existing popular dance form. Nevis, another island settled by the English, also has a Maypole tradition.[37] There are however African maypole dances and elsewhere in the Caribbean this type of dance can be found in non-English colonised territories, for example in Cuba, which was

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[34] Marcia Burrowes, *History and Cultural Identity: Barbadian Space and the legacy of empire.* (doctoral thesis, University of Warwick, 2000), p. 201.
[35] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. by Helene Iswolsky (n.p.: Indiana University Press, 1984), pp. 410-1.
[36] Interview with Owen Griffith.
[37] See John W. Nunley and Judith Bettelheim, *Caribbean Festival Arts* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), p. 80 for a photograph from 1908 showing masqueraders in Nevis performing a Maypole dance. It is possible that a poetic reference published by Grainger in 1764 refers to the maypole when describing slaves dancing, 'bound in the center, and fantastic twine'. This could be portraying the maypole with the ribbons being bound around it, though this may be nothing more than a reference to some sort of ring dance. John Gilmore, *The Poetics of Empire: A Study of James Grainger's The Sugar-Cane* (London: Athlone Press, 2000), p. 161.

colonised by Spain. In Trinidad, a maypole dance called *Sebucan*, is performed as part of carnival and is claimed to be of Latin-American origin.[38]

Given the lack of scholarship on this subject, it is possible to speculate about why the Landship performs the Maypole dance – it is usually associated with land-based traditions rather than sea-faring ones. The Landship's portrayal of the maypole may reflect some symbolism relating to the Middle Passage, the voyage from West Africa to the West Indies, during which the slaves were packed into the holds of ships in atrocious, inhumane conditions. The Maypole could symbolise the masts of the slave ships, which the slaves would have seen when they were taken onto the decks for their exercise, thus the association of the masts with some minor relief from their suffering.

Photograph 25: The Landship dancing the Maypole[39]

[38] Daniel J. Crowley, 'The Traditional Masques of Carnival' in *Caribbean Quarterly*, 4 (1956) 194-223 (p. 216).
[39] Photograph taken by John Meredith at Oistins Fish Festival, 24 April 2000.

Photograph 26: The Landship dancing the Maypole[40]

Some recontextualisation of the Landship dances has occurred since Independence as dance groups have adopted them and incorporated them into their repertoire. This first started with the now defunct cultural group Yoruba Yard in the 1970s and subsequently with groups such as Pinelands Creative Workshop and Dancing Africa. Their performances reach beyond the traditional audience for a Landship, although they are not necessarily authentic, having been adapted and choreographed for stage performance by the addition of steps from other dance forms and some hammed-up acting to amuse the audience.

## Landship and the Tuk Band

The Landship is of particular importance to my work as it is very much linked with the tuk band. It is generally accepted that they developed separately and subsequently joined together, but it is also possible that they developed together. However, the importance of the tuk band, which is known as the 'engine' of the Landship, is indisputable. Indeed it would be very difficult for the Landship to manoeuvre without some form of time-keeping accompaniment, so whilst the tuk

[40] Photograph taken by John Meredith at Oistins Fish Festival, 24 April 2000.

band can operate independently, I do not believe the Landship can. I would suggest therefore that the Landship was created with some sort of band in place, and it is highly likely to have been modelled on those musical ensembles found on board naval ships of the time. For example, an account from one ship, the *Asia* in 1840, refers to fiddlers, and a drum and fife band playing every night.[41] Photograph 27, below, taken on board H.M.S. *Coquette* in 1855 clearly shows a fiddler, fifer and drummer.[42] The ship's muster book records one crewmember, George Phillips, who served on the ship from 1855-1860, and specifically identifies him as being black and born in Barbados.[43] Initial searches in the Royal Navy's service records reveal little else about him, but further research may establish if he played any role in the Landship's formation.

Photograph 27

[41] W. P. Ashcroft, 'Reminiscences' in *Naval Review*, 1964, p. 61, cited in Peter Padfield, *Rule Britannia: The Victorian and Edwardian Navy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 34.
[42] Photograph reproduced by kind permission of the National Maritime Museum. Reproduction ID A152.
[43] Description Book of H. M. Steam Ship *Coquette*, Muster Book 30 November 1855-17 February 1860, Entry 49B. ADM38/7944. Public Record Office, Kew.

In 1981 Marshall et al. note that tuk music had been played 'among the mass of the people [...] over the past 100-120 years'.[44] This suggests that tuk dates back to the 1860s-1880s, which further suggests a link with the Landship which, if we accept the now traditional view, started in the 1860s.

The band provides the music which drives the Landship on in their manoeuvres, the members following the lead of the band for changes in tempo. If the flute is absent this does not seem to matter greatly – it is the pulse and rhythm that are important. I have seen the Landship perform with just drum accompaniment, setting the tempo for the manoeuvres and keeping the crew in check and inciting them to 'build up steam' and therefore speed, as the pressure increases. An example of this can be heard on Track 12 of the accompanying CD. The voice that can be heard giving commands is Captain Watson, and the sound of the whistle is part of a signal to change direction or manoeuvre. [45]

Willock describes the three speeds of tuk as constituting:

> the stages through which the "engine" goes as it pressurizes for the "trip on the open seas". The waltz would be used for the "warm up" at about 50lbs.; then the fassie, or march, would increase it to about 80lbs. The Tuk beat would take it over the 100lbs. mark and the "ship" would then be sailing at full speed, displayed by the manoeuvre of the "crew" as they go about their duties.[46]

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[44] Trevor Marshall, Peggy McGeary and Grace Thompson, *Folk Songs of Barbados* (Kingston: Ian Randle, 1981), p. 31.
[45] Recording made by Sharon Meredith at the Official Opening of the National Heritage Fair, National Heritage Park, Four Square, 1 December 1997.
[46] Wayne Willock, *The History of Tuk Music*, (Barbados: Rotherley Construction, 1997).

The Landship has at times used other melodic instruments in their tuk bands. Photograph 28 below is the first of two undated photographs I have obtained from Barbados Government Information Service and it shows a trumpet being played alongside a penny whistle. It is believed this photograph was taken at the funeral of Commander Marshall of the Landship, which dates it to 1973.

Photograph 28

Photograph 29 below shows a melodica being played instead of a penny whistle. The instrument seems to have been adapted with a small mouthpiece into which the player blows air via a tube into the mouthpiece of the instrument.

Photograph 29

**Parallels with the Landship**

Whilst the Landship is unique to Barbados there have been similar organisations elsewhere and the incidence of these suggests that the Landship is imitative and could be modelled on something found elsewhere. Downes points to the existence of similar friendly societies in Sierra Leone dating from the 1890s, which had ships' masts on the roof and used similar ranks for the members.[47] In Trinidad in the mid-nineteenth century the masked balls of the Europeans developed into a form of street ritual in which sailor bands would imitate 'the drunken movements of seamen, and steam ship "stokers" would push pokers around in the streets in a series of elaborate movements'.[48]

[47] Downes, 'Sailing from Colonial into National Waters', pp. 101-2.
[48] Peter Mason, *Bacchanal! The Carnival Culture of Trinidad* (London: Latin America Bureau, 1998), p. 111. For a full discussion of sailor bands see Crowley, 'The Traditional Masques of Carnival', pp. 200-4.

In the United States, the Ancient Mariners Fife and Drum Corps is a recreation of early nineteenth century sailors playing hornpipes, jigs and worksongs using the wooden fife and rope-tensioned drums. Whilst they do not recreate the activities on board ship through dance or drill as the Landship does, this is an example of fife and drum music from a nautically inspired background.[49]

Roger Abrahams notes the existence of Landships on St Vincent and other islands, though does not cite where he found this information. It is feasible however that Landships did exist on St Vincent considering its proximity to Barbados (approximately 140 kilometres west). Abrahams suggests that such groups were 'perhaps inspired by the tradition of the militia each year at Christmas, whose maneuvers were one of the major attractions of that season'.[50] In St Kitts at the end of the nineteenth century masqueraders 'dressed as British sailors, who twined ribbons about a portable Maypole' were observed.[51] Thus, as with tuk, there are, or have been, direct parallels with the Landship elsewhere in the Caribbean.

An interesting comparison with the Landship is Beni, a friendly society found in Kenya in East Africa that has a surprising number of parallels. Beni first appeared in the 1890s and ended in the 1960s when Kenya achieved Independence. Ranger says 'Beni dancers copied European military and ceremonial uniforms; took pride in their skill at drill, and often put on lavish displays of loyalty to the

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[49] See www.tiac.net/users/smitchel/mariners/index.html
[50] 'The Shaping of Folklore Traditions the British West Indies', *Journal of Inter-American Studies*, 9 (1967), 456-80 (p. 478).
[51] Alfred M Williams, 'A Miracle-Play in the West Indies', *Journal of American Folklore*, 9 (1896), 117-20 (p. 117).

British Crown'.[52] As in the Landship, military ranks were used, though Beni used army ranks such as General and Private rather than naval ones, and women members were 'nurses', though they did not actually participate in the drill.

It seems that many European traditions were advocated by European missionaries who perceived African traditions as wicked or wrong. Many Africans were put into the care of these missionaries after the British Navy intercepted illegal slave ships. Whilst in the missionaries' care, the freed Africans pursued their own traditions, including dancing and decorating themselves, which included cutting their faces. This caused the missionaries to ban the playing of the 'wicked' drums, which they believed led the Africans astray. It seems as a result of this that the 'good' drums of the Europeans could be used and the missionaries 'were pleased to give them [the Africans] musical instruments for a band, knowing that they were better than their drums'.[53]

Ranger says that in Europe from the 1880s 'the youth of the slums were being organized into Christian "armies" and "brigades", and marching to the sound of the fife and drum band'.[54] This suggests that the development of organisations such as the Landship and Beni were in fact imitations of fairly common British practices.

After World War I, returning soldiers helped the spread of Beni. They were attempting to keep themselves together and to show their people what they had learned in the forces. Beni was highly disciplined and this was undoubtedly an

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[52] T. O. Ranger, *Dance and Society in Eastern Africa 1890-1970* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 9.
[53] Ranger, *Dance and Society*, p. 12.
[54] Ibid., p. 12. Such organisations still exist in Britain today, for example: The Boys' Brigade, The Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade.

attraction to them. Members were also required to help other members who were in trouble.

Beni is associated with brass bands rather than tuk-type bands, which probably reflects the fact that by the late nineteenth century military music had developed into larger bands with more instruments than just a fife and a couple of drums. There were European traditions and influences in East Africa when Beni developed, but Ranger concludes that the apparent exoticisms of Beni, such as danced drill and mimic combat, were actually derived from pre-existing competitive dance traditions of the Swahili Coast.[55] This is an extremely interesting parallel to the Landship - there are many similarities, and their development within thirty years of each other may be significant. The extent to which the two are related is an area of research beyond the scope of this thesis.

The fact that two such similar organisations have existed suggests that both are the result of colonialism. Both the Landship and Beni seek to mimic the military through use of uniform, military-style discipline and the music of the military. This appears to reinforce class divisions as those participating mimic those higher in assumed social status whilst using imitation to seemingly flatter their colonisers.

## SUMMARY

The use of drums and fifes (and fiddles) on board Navy ships around the time the Landship's founder is believed to have served in the Navy was common for entertainment of the crew. I believe that the use of the instruments found in the tuk band in the Landship is simply a further retention or imitation of naval traditions. The relationship between the Landship and the tuk band is therefore, I

[55] Ibid., p. 164.

believe, a natural one, and the common belief that the two evolved separately and subsequently joined together is inaccurate.

Many Barbadians may well regard the Landship as a relic from colonial days and therefore inappropriate and unacceptable in an independent Barbados in which they wish to be free of British connections. The Landship today is kept afloat by the efforts of a small number of people, with the assistance of the Government. If the Government had not stepped in when they did in the 1970s, the Landship might well have disappeared by now. However, the present day membership is small and there are few young members who may choose not to continue their participation as they grow up, thus its perpetuation is looking decidedly unsure. Government initiatives and sponsorship may help to keep the Landship operating for the time being, but without committed members there is little to develop for the future.

# Chapter 4

# THE CONTEMPORARY BARBADIAN MUSIC SCENE

## INTRODUCTION

An overview of the music and festivals found in Barbados is an important part of this thesis to demonstrate the place of tuk in the country's musical life compared to other musical genres. Barbados today is a country rich in music; as well as enjoying international musics such as reggae, dub and R & B, it also boasts a vast amount of creativity in different genres including calypso, soca, spouge, ringbang, gospel, folk song, classical, jazz and steelband. The range of musics found in Barbados covers all tastes, whether it is home-grown or foreign, and a walk down a street in any residential area will testify to that as music emanates from many of the houses. Even on public transport music is often played and, with the exception of the Government-run buses, a trip on any bus is highly likely to be accompanied by some very loud music.

## BACKGROUND

For a long period of time the music scene in Barbados was dominated by European musics reflecting the tastes of the plantocracy and colonising British. This meant that from its earliest colonisation well into the twentieth century the musics that were generally publicly heard were western classical, military and religious music.

Up to the time of Independence (1966), and to a certain extent beyond, the upper classes of Barbadian society believed that the only acceptable forms of music were European ones and aspired to music of the Western classical tradition, which was taught in schools, children were sent for piano lessons and classical concerts were held in Bridgetown. Until the last few years of the twentieth century, music teaching in schools did not always include Caribbean music, but this changed with

the introduction in the late 1990s of a new syllabus set by the Caribbean Examinations Council, which incorporates Caribbean music into the curriculum.

When radio was introduced into Barbados the music that dominated the airwaves was North American and British, and this trend continues today. It was brought to the attention of the country's music industry at the Caribbean Congaline Music Symposium held in Barbados in April 2000, that the majority of music played on air in Barbados is foreign. Not only does this diminish local artistes' exposure on air, but also has a significant adverse effect on the balance of payments. Derek Wilkie, Chief Executive Officer of the Copyright Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, suggested that 85 percent of royalties collected in Barbados each year were going overseas.[1] The Minister of Culture, Mia Mottley, who attended the Symposium, was concerned by this and appealed to radio stations to play more Caribbean music.[2] However, these requests were ignored and legislation was passed in December 2000 'that requires all radio stations to ensure 60 per cent of their daily diet has a Caribbean flavour'. Another contributing factor was undoubtedly the Minister's realisation that less than 30 percent of music royalties collected for all musics publicly played in Barbados were paid to local artistes.[3] This issue does not seem to have gone away however as in November 2001, Glyne Murray, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office raised the issue, questioning why local radio was not playing more local music for the Independence celebrations in November, whereas they automatically play appropriate music for other events or times of the year.[4] In January 2002, the Copyright Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers claimed that only 18

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[1] Kent Jerson, 'Locals losing out on royalties', *Barbados Advocate*, 20 April 2000, p. 3.
[2] 'Play the Music' *Daily Nation* Online, 15 March 2000.
'New Air Play', Chris Gollop, *Daily Nation* Online, 24 December 2000.
[3] 'Local artistes not reaping sweets', *Sunday Sun*, 30 April 2000, p. 21A.
[4] 'Murray wants 100% Bajan Music', *Daily Nation* Online, 18 November 2001.

percent of royalties collected in Barbados remain there, and partly attributed this to the poor logging of music played by local radio stations, along with the existing situation where little local music is played on air.[5] However, such a scenario is not unique to Barbados. Malm and Wallis found in Trinidad in 1987/8 that only 25 percent of moneys collected were to be distributed there, and that, with the exception of the carnival season, 'the share of local music in the media was as low as 15-20 percent'.[6]

Barbadian musics were often dismissed as being inferior, often because much of that music was the music of the working classes.[7] This has also contributed to the belief that Barbados does not have its own music.[8] A typical explanation given is that, apart from spouge, which I discuss later, pp. 270-2, Barbados has to borrow everything.[9] In the days of slavery African music was looked down on, which will have contributed to this negative view of Barbadian music.[10] The Barbadian journalist, Ricky Jordan, suggests that 'Caribbean people have been brainwashed into believing that whatever comes from the grassroots level of our people must be approached with great suspicion, scepticism, laughter.' He says that even until the

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[5] Ricky Jordan, 'Artistes lose out on royalties', *Daily Nation* Online, 8 January 2002. This is, however, an increase of 3 percent from 2000.
[6] Krister Malm and Roger Wallis, *Media Policy and Music Activity* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 78.
[7] Interview with Grafton Browne, formerly tailor in Barbados, now retired and living in U.K., 16 August 1999.
[8] Comment made by Janice Millington, Barbadian musician and music teacher, at the Caribbean Congaline Music Symposium, Barbados, 29 April 2000.
[9] Interview with Karl Watson, Barbadian historian, 3 December 1997. Informal conversation with young Barbadian, 16 February 1999.
[10] For example: George Pinckard, *Notes on the West Indies*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (London: Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, 1816), I, p. 126, described the music of black Barbadians as being 'of a savage nature'; Griffith Hughes, *The Natural History of Barbados* (New York: Arno Press, 1972), p. 16, described slaves dancing 'rude Dances to Music still ruder'; *Dyott's Diary 1781-1845: A Selection from the Journal of William Dyott, Sometime General in The British Army and Aide-de-Camp to His Majesty King George III*, ed. by Reginald W. Jeffery (London: Archibald, Constable & Co Ltd, 1907), pp. 94-5. Dyott wrote 'the Negro dances are most curious, and their music still more so'.

1960s calypsonians 'were seen as drunkards singing "sinful music."'[11] This however has not been, and is not, a universal belief, otherwise there would be no calypsonians. Such beliefs are linked with class divisions and the middle classes will invariably look down on what comes from the grassroots (I believe this is one of the issues surrounding the acceptance of tuk and this was discussed in Chapter 2, pp. 189-3). Simon Frith explains this is because:

> people produce and consume the music they are capable of producing and consuming; different social groups possess different sorts of knowledge and skill, share different cultural histories, and so make music differently. Musical tastes do correlate with class cultures and subcultures; musical styles are linked to specific age groups.[12]

The music industry in Barbados today is not insignificant, bringing in over BDS $15 million in foreign exchange annually, significantly from festivals and overseas tours by popular bands.[13] The music business also generates income in other areas such as tourism and hospitality, sales of merchandise and promotional items, and associated services such as stage management, lighting and sound.

## The National Cultural Foundation

The National Cultural Foundation is a Government institution with responsibility for the country's cultural preservation and development. The Foundation was established in 1983 and started work in 1984. The Chief Executive Officer runs the organisation, she is reported to by the Cultural Officers who are supported by a number of administrative staff. The Cultural Officers each have a specific area of responsibility, for example, Music and Literary Arts.

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[11] 'Dancehall here to stay', *Sunday Sun*, 23 April 2000, p. 21A.
[12] Simon Frith, 'Music and Identity' in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. by Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: Sage Publications, 1996), p. 120.
[13] Ricky Jordan, 'Music Score', *Daily Nation* Online, 1 May 2001.

The Foundation organises festivals, chiefly the Congaline Festival in May, the Crop Over Festival in July/August and the National Independence Festival of Creative Arts, which will be discussed later, pp. 284-5. It also organises exhibitions and workshops and runs two theatres and an art gallery in Queen's Park. Publications have included *Banja: A Magazine of Barbadian Life and Culture*, five issues of which were published between 1987 and 1990, and various booklets, but this activity seems to have stopped.

In the mid-1990s a review was made and new objectives for the National Cultural Foundation were set out. Some of the key aims were to educate Barbadians in their heritage; to provide fora where Barbadian artistes could showcase their talents; to increase activity in cultural industries, and to maximise the role of these in tourism.[14] How well the National Cultural Foundation has achieved this is a debatable issue but this is beyond the scope of this study. Historically record-keeping has been poor, possibly due to lack of training, space or money, thus information is seemingly unavailable and insufficient time has been blamed for jobs not being done properly. Certainly information I have tried to get from the National Cultural Foundation has not been forthcoming.

## MUSIC IN BARBADOS

There are many genres of music in Barbados. It would be impossible to discuss them all, and not all are relevant to this thesis. The musics that I have selected to discuss, in chronological order, are those that play, or have played, key roles in the musical life of the country, the more significant ones being discussed in more

[14] Kathleen Drayton, 'Art, Culture and National Heritage' in *Barbados: Thirty Years of Independence*, ed. by Trevor Carmichael (Kingston: Ian Randle, 1996), pp. 197-237 (pp. 212-3).

depth. Due to its controversial relationship to tuk, I have already discussed ringbang in Chapter 2, pp. 201-4.

## Folk Song

Blacking says that during his fieldwork in Africa he learned 'that *all* music is folk music, in the sense that music cannot be transmitted or have meaning without associations between people'.[15] This may well be true, but for the purpose of this study, 'folk' music or song will refer to a particular genre of music.

Folk song is a form of social commentary where the folk relay stories, voice their complaints, and celebrate. Folk song could also be used to ease the burden of work as well as for more recreational activities, hence the emphasis is on the words and the melody, thus there is no need, or place, for large backing groups as often found in other musical genres today.

There is an established body of Barbadian folk songs, which are known to some of the Barbadian population. The only published work dedicated to Barbadian folk song is *Folk Songs of Barbados*, which resulted from extensive research in the 1970s by Trevor Marshall and Peggy McGeary who collected these songs from all over Barbados, mainly from the working classes.[16] Most were collected from people then aged over fifty, so assuming they were taught them by their parents and grandparents, some could date back well into the nineteenth century. There are likely to have been many other songs, some quite obscure, and undoubtedly,

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[15] John Blacking, *How Musical is Man?* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973; repr. London: Faber and Faber, 1976), p. vi.
[16] Trevor Marshall, Peggy McGeary, and Grace Thompson, *Folk Songs of Barbados* (Kingston: Ian Randle, 1996).

due to the oral transmission of folk song, many of these have been lost for good.[17] Some may have been selectively 'forgotten' - McGeary told me that she encountered reluctance to pass on to her some of the songs as they were considered to be 'foolish'.[18]

Best claims that 'Barbados' tradition of folk songs dates back to the 1830s.' [19] This claim may be based on historical evidence of songs relating to slave emancipation. However, it cannot be said categorically that this was when the tradition started. Some songs can be dated to a particular period or event by their lyrics, but others are timeless.

As with other aspects of Barbadian culture that belonged predominantly to the working classes, folk song has not enjoyed a high profile and before Independence was not considered to be widely acceptable by the upper classes. This consideration would have been reinforced by some religious groups who frowned upon secular music and believed such activity to be going against leading a Godly life. Since Independence and the reawakening of interest in things Barbadian, more notice has gradually been taken of folk song and folklore in general.

Many Barbadian folk songs are sung in the local dialect and were carried around the island by the vendors, often known as hawkers or hucksters, who travelled into the towns selling their produce and wares. These vendors acted as travelling

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[17] For further discussion of oral tradition and folklore see, for example, Donald R. Hill, *Calypso Calaloo: Early Carnival Music in Trinidad* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), p. 114; Richard Carlin, *English and American Folk Music* (New York: Facts of File Publications, 1987), pp. 1-4.

[18] Interview, 5 December 1997.

[19] Curwen Best, *Roots to Popular Culture: Barbadian Aesthetics: Kamau Brathwaite to Hardcore Styles* (London: Macmillan Education, 2001), p. 134.

newspapers, carrying the latest gossip and news from one part of the island to another.[20] It is perhaps from this tradition that the strolling minstrels emerged. These minstrels, playing guitars or similar instruments, would sing popular songs, targeting their audience appropriately. This tradition continued well into the twentieth century and older Barbadians today recall the likes of Shillingford Agard, who performed for people from all walks of life, not just the working classes.

Another form of minstrelsy was scrubbing, a musical form usually associated with Christmastime. It appears to have pretty much died out around the mid-twentieth century. Scrubbers, a small group of men, probably three or four, would wander around the villages early on Christmas morning singing carols, in return for which they expected food and drink or money. The words of the carols would be substituted as appropriate. Lynch notes that the group would play comb and paper, a tin flute and guitar, each playing or singing in his own key.[21] It is possible however that this type of activity did not die out completely. I discovered a photocopy of an article from an unnamed newspaper at the Barbados Museum Library, which reveals that Fitz 'Bathsheba' Goodman was a band leader playing from 1961 to 1995. He did not describe himself as a scrubber, but called his band 'drum and kettle men'. However as they only appear to have performed at Christmas, many people would have considered them to be scrubbers. Goodman's band seem to have followed the traditional tuk band way of touring a district, receiving food and drink and maybe money in return for playing.[22] Undoubtedly some of the folk songs would have contributed to the repertoire of the

[20] Marshall et al., *Folk Songs of Barbados* p. xv.
[21] Louis Lynch, *West Indian Eden* (Glasgow: Richard Maclehouse, 1959), p. 213.
[22] Andrea Holder, 'Ruk-a-tuk musician', 21 December 1997. Photocopy found in Tuk file at Barbados Museum Library, source not given.

tuk bands, and, in the days when tuk was sung, the bands would have contributed to the spread of such songs. Sung tuk was discussed in Chapter 2, pp. 159-67.

Another version of scrubbing was described to me by the calypsonian Lord Radio (Oliver Broomes). He told me that when he was a teenager in the mid-1950s, hotels only hired bands for big functions. The entertainers would go around the hotels informally and, where they were allowed, would go in and play for the guests who would throw them some money. Sometimes they would play on the beach just outside the hotel grounds.[23]

Today the foremost folk singer in Barbados is probably Gabby (Anthony Carter), though his high profile as a calypsonian gives him different audience appeal to dedicated folk performers such as the Ellerslie Folk Chorale. Also, Gabby is better known as a folk singer for his own compositions rather than traditional Barbadian songs. A composition by someone such as Gabby that is deemed to be 'folk' falls into that category because of the nature of the song, focussing on a particular event or person in local life that is noteworthy and may become part of the folklore that is handed down to successive generations.[24]

There is currently some attempt to teach folk song in schools. A key figure in this is Peggy McGeary, the Education Officer of the Barbados Museum. The Museum runs an education programme, which covers various aspects of heritage and

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[23] Interview, 13 February 2001.

[24] However this application of the term folk song, where it is applied 'both to the genuine product of the folk mind and to any songs that have become widely accepted', as opposed to its original meaning of a song for which the composer is not traceable and no single composer is assumed, is not agreed with by all.[24] A brief inspection of many books on folk music will find the International Folk Music Council's 1955 definition of folk music which states that the term 'does not cover composed popular music that has been taken over ready-made by a community and remains unchanged'. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Stanley Sadie, 29 vols (London: Macmillan Publishers, 2001), IX, 64.

culture for all schoolchildren. With her in-depth knowledge of folk song developed from her university research and subsequent work on the *Folk Songs of Barbados* book, McGeary is able to teach not only the songs, but also the history of them and deals with what the words are actually saying. This provides children with some exposure to songs they may not otherwise ever encounter.

## Religious Music

The role of religious music in Barbados has been significant for the majority of the working class population. In the days before radio and television, this was the music they probably heard and participated in most regularly. Other musics would have been encountered on social occasions and holidays, notably the tuk band. Many Barbadians have moved away from the Anglican Church with its centuries-old traditions to the newer, less formal, Pentecostal and evangelical-type churches. Undoubtedly a desire to move away from the imposed church of the colonial masters led some away, but a search for something more relevant and more modern was also a contributing factor. The music of these newer churches offered a different, more relaxed way of praise singing, and one that can be quite infectious with its lively rhythms, a style of music that can be played and sung outside of church, in the home or in concerts, without seeming out of place. There have been some efforts made to modernise the music of the Anglican Church, notably by the Reverend William Dixon who believed the Anglican Church to be 'too English in its worship'.[25] He has encouraged the use of Caribbean instruments, notably steel pan, and Caribbean musical genres, such as calypso, as part of the act of worship.

[25] Hartley Henry, 'Church Changes', *Daily Nation*, 24 August 1987, p. 1.

With the advent of modern technology, a wealth of new and very different sounds were available, and changes in lifestyle, beliefs and aspirations occurred, which contributed to a decline in church attendance. However, there is still plenty of religious music around and because it has been able to move out of church and be readily acceptable in other venues and on radio, it has maintained a fairly high profile.

Gospel music is very popular in Barbados and has been strongly influenced by gospel from America, but local artistes such as Joseph Niles and Sister Marshall have been active in this sector of music for over thirty years. Niles is noted to have employed Caribbean rhythms, including spouge, in his music, performing well-known spirituals with a Caribbean flavour.[26]

Gospel concerts are fairly regular events today with a mixture of performance, audience participation and prayer. Performers often sing well-known songs with lively choruses with which the audience join in, dance and clap. Musical accompaniment is usually provided by a band with electric guitars, drum kit, trumpets and or saxophones, although sometimes steel pans are used. Since 1993, Gospelfest, a week-long festival dedicated to gospel music and worship has been held in Barbados each May.

## Classical Music

One of the many legacies of colonialism is the classical music scene in Barbados. Certainly during the nineteenth century concerts were regular events and programmes were advertised in local newspapers. Music ranged from Bach and

[26] Some examples of recordings of Barbadian gospel include Sister Marshall, *Walk Holy* (Quality Sound QS1005CD, 2001); Joseph Niles, *Go on to Glory Vol. 1* (RED0026, 1992); Various Artistes, *Songs of Redemption* (RED003, 1987).

Haydn to Rossini and Offenbach, with regimental bands from the Garrison sometimes featuring in the concerts.[27]

Until the very end of the twentieth century, classical music and western composers dominated the music taught in schools, reinforcing the belief that Western things were superior to local.

## Calypso

Calypso is a musical genre that some consider comes only from Trinidad where it is generally believed to have originated.[28] However calypso or variations on it are to be found elsewhere in the Caribbean, and Barbados boasts its own thriving calypso industry. The reason for this spread of such a type of music stems from the African heritage of the slaves and their descendants, which originated in their extemporised songs of satire. The word calypso is derived from the West African word 'kaiso', a name still occasionally used today instead of calypso, as Allsopp says, kaiso is the 'original and more regular folk-name of the calypso'.[29] Manuel et al. suggest that early calypsonians drew on a range of sources including *calindas* (music associated with stick fighting), Shango songs, creole folk songs and 'a set of familiar, major-key stock tunes that were essentially English in character'. Despite this, however, 'many Trinidadians prefer to ascribe an African origin to calypso, as suggested by the West African term *kaiso*'.[30] Hill suggests that kaiso

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[27] Concerts advertised in the *Barbados Agricultural Reporter*, 17 January 1873, p. 3 and 15 August 1873, p. 3.

[28] There is extensive literature on the subject of Trinidadian calypso. See for example: John H. Cowley, *Carnival, Canboulay and Calypso: Traditions in the Making* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Hill, *Calypso Calaloo: Early Carnival Music in Trinidad*; Peter Mason, *Bacchanal! The Carnival Culture of Trinidad* (London: Latin America Bureau, 1998); Gordon Rohlehr, *Calypso and Society in Pre-Independence Trinidad* (Trinidad: the author, 1990).

[29] *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage*, ed. by Richard Allsopp, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) p. 324.

[30] Peter Manuel, Kenneth M. Bilby and Michael Largey, *Caribbean Currents: Caribbean Music from Rumba to Reggae* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), p. 188.

is 'a term possibly derived from the Hausa word for '*bravo*' and that it is 'an exclamation shouted while a calypso is being sung'.[31]

Calypso is used as a vehicle for social commentary. The topic of the lyrics can relate to anything and are often about a recent news story or a current issue that is causing concern or is ripe for ridicule. Thus the lyrics, which are often scathing or witty, are the most important part of the song. In the days before television and radio it may well have been the calypsonians who kept the local people up to date with news, and who may also have spread gossip through their songs. The social commentary in calypso is put across in a way that necessitates careful listening to get the full meaning of the lyrics, but unless the listener is a local and aware of the latest news or scandal, then the meaning may well be lost. Calypso is text-oriented, unlike some song formats where the words are secondary to the music, or those where the lyrics are almost incoherent.[32] In calypso, the calypsonian is putting across a message using devices such as double entendre, innuendo and rhyme in a way that can be both amusing and purposeful.

Such types of song undoubtedly existed during slavery, but due to the lack of evidence it is not possible to be absolutely certain. This may be because the occasions when slaves sang this type of song would have been when there were few if any observers, for example when they were at work in the fields or at the weekend dances on the plantations. Also if the slaves were mocking or denigrating their masters, they would have almost certainly made sure only their fellow slaves could understand the meaning of the lyrics.

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[31] Hill, *Calypso Calaloo*, p. 312.

[32] The inexperienced listener may confuse calypso and soca. As will be discussed later in this chapter, pp. 272-4, soca is a dance music, with lyrics of little significance.

After Emancipation in Barbados there was a major effort by the Anglican Church to educate the former slaves in Christian values and ways. This seems to have been rather successful and as well as making people believe it was wrong to sing and dance on Sundays, the Church taught that secular songs were not acceptable. This belief still exists to a certain extent today, and not necessarily only from members of Anglican churches. One Barbadian told me that in the 1960s he could not even mention the word calypso in front of his mother.[33] I recall from my first visit to Barbados in 1989 that on Sundays the only music played on the radio was of a religious nature.

Barbadian calypso is sometimes also called banja. Millington suggests that banja was practised prior to the 1930s by labourers and only found in villages.[34] The term is however sometimes used to describe all traditional Barbadian music. Collymore defines the term 'play banjo' as being used in connection with tuk music, as well as being 'to sing, whistle, or hum any secular air'.[35] This is a little confusing to the non-Barbadian, as in Barbados banjo is pronounced as banja.[36] Allsopp defines banja as 'a song or tune for dancing that evidently used to be accompanied by the banjo'.

The forerunners of today's calypsonians were probably the strolling minstrels of the 1920s and 30s. The best known of these was Shillingford Agard or 'Shilling' who fulfilled such a role for over fifty years playing his guitar and improvising

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[33] Interview with Adisa Andwele, Senior Business Development Officer, National Cultural Foundation, 14 February 2001.
[34] Janice Millington, 'Barbados' in *South America, Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean*, ed. by Dale A. Olsen and Daniel E. Sheehy, The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, 2 (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1998), pp. 813-21.
[35] Frank A. Collymore, *Barbadian Dialect*, 4th edn (The Barbados National Trust, 1970), p. 7.
[36] *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage*, p. 79.

songs.[37] Wandering around the island making up songs appropriate for whatever audience they came across, they had to be quick-thinking to extemporise on any subject. Because the songs were improvised each performance was unique, though undoubtedly stock phrases, rhymes and tunes were used, and the art of extemporising was learned by listening to those who excelled in the art. These performers were usually working class and performed primarily within their own social circle. They did not enjoy the approval of much of the population, many of whom listened to imported musics on the radio, classical music and the religious music of Christian churches. Barbadian writer, Lance Bannister's poem, *Banjoman*, based on real life, tells of the popular view that 'playing the banjo to tell you the truth, is only the sign of a misspent youth'.[38]

The movement of calypsos between islands is noted as occurring before 1890, some arriving in Trinidad from Martinique and Dominica, others from Barbados arriving in 1910.[39] During this time there was increased movement of people travelling in search of employment elsewhere in the region, as well as the trade that took place between the islands, and this would have brought in new influences musically and otherwise.

In Trinidad calypsonians were well organised and taken seriously. They belonged to tents as opposed to Barbadian calypsonians who continued to wander around the streets playing where they could, at rum shops or informal gatherings of people, as there were no proper venues for performance. A 'tent' is 'the venue

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[37] I have been fortunate to obtain a rare recording of a Rediffusion radio programme featuring Shilling, courtesy of Alfred Pragnell.
[38] Lance Bannister, 'Banjoman', *Banja: A Magazine of Barbadian Life and Culture*, 3 (1988), 16-7. This also includes a reproduction of a postcard of a Barbadian guitar player at the turn of the twentieth century.
[39] See 'Kaisos From Other Lands' in R. Quevedo, *Atilla's Kaiso: a short history of Trinidad calypso* (St Augustine: University of the West Indies, Department of Extra Mural Studies, 1983), pp. 14-9.

where calypsos are performed nightly in the period before Carnival, Crop-Over or equivalent cultural festival'.[40]

When Barbadian radio started playing Trinidadian calypsos this highlighted the difference between Trinidadian and Barbadian calypso and led to a belief held by some that Trinidadian calypso was superior to Barbadian. Trevor Marshall says that in the 1960s the image that prevailed of the Barbadian calypsonian was 'that of a "comic" singer who could not produce polished and "classy" compositions such as were coming from the creative talent of a generation of new artists in Trinidad'.[41] Such beliefs continued beyond Independence and it was only with artistes such as Sir Don (Don Marshall), the Mighty Gabby (Anthony Carter) and Mighty Grynner (McDonald Blenman) that a Barbadian style of calypso became widely recognised. With the revival of Crop Over in the early 1970s calypso was given a new purpose – it could recontextualise itself into a staged performance genre instead of being a wandering minstrel type of song. This led to increased calypso activity, and from 1974 the number of calypsonians increased from around twenty-five to over two hundred registered with the National Cultural Foundation in 1985.[42]

Calypso tents in Barbados started in the late 1970s providing opportunities for calypsonians to compete against each other at all levels as well as attracting considerable audiences. This format continues today and tents begin well in advance of the official start of Crop Over. Whilst there is today a central core of established calypsonians such as Red Plastic Bag (Stedson Wiltshire), the Mighty

[40] Allsopp, *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage*, p. 551. They are named tents 'because these performances were originally held in bamboo tents'.
[41] Trevor Marshall, *Notes on the History and Evolution of Calypso in Barbados*, Department of History Seminar Paper 2, 1985-86 (Cave Hill: University of the West Indies), p. 29.
[42] Ibid., pp. 28, 33.

Gabby (also referred to simply as Gabby) and John King, there are also plenty of amateurs who are keen to enter the tents, which demonstrates the popularity and democracy of calypso.[43] Crop Over would be a much smaller event without the numerous tents leading up to the semi-finals and finals, which are both major features of the festival. There is now even a Celebrity Calypso Monarch competition for well-known Barbadians to try their hand at satire.

In 2000 the National Cultural Foundation and Ministry of Education instigated a programme to start teaching schoolchildren to compose and perform calypso. The programme co-ordinator is Wayne 'Poonka' Willock who also successfully co-ordinates the Cultural and Historical Exposure for Kids in Schools (CHEKS) scheme, which was discussed in Chapter 2, pp. 212-8. The plan is to have a competition in each school, the winners of which will compete against each other for places in a Junior Monarch competition at Crop Over. Willock called upon experienced calypsonians to assist with the scheme and in March 2001 he stated that he had promises from a number of well-known calypsonians including John King, Gabby, Romeo (Charles Smith) and Red Plastic Bag.[44] Interestingly an article in February 2001 suggests that there may have been a little friction in getting this arrangement off the ground. Gabby claimed that he was 'still awaiting word from the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, regarding his proposal to teach calypso in schools'.[45]

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[43] For examples of Barbadian calypso listen to; Gabby, *'til now* (Blue Wave Records, 961702, 1996); Red Plastic Bag, *Unlimited* (Bayfield Records Ltd, BF – CD 049, 1998); John King, *Message from Beyond* (CRS Music and Steel Donkey Records, C-0053-CD, 1998).
[44] 'Poonka's Kaiso Call', *Daily Nation* Online, 30 March 2001.
[45] Gemell Lewis, 'Gabby still awaiting word on teaching proposal', *Barbados Advocate*, 14 February 2001, p. 7.

Calypso is an important part of Barbadian culture, its audiences hugely appreciative of the witty and pointed social commentary. Many of Barbados' calypsonians only sing professionally part-time, unlike singers of other genres. This is probably because, unlike other musics, there is little scope outside Barbados for Barbadian calypso due to the local nature of the commentary. Some calypsos do become popular elsewhere, but these are in the minority.

## Jazz

Jazz is another music that has established itself, albeit on a small scale, in Barbados. There are jazz evenings held at various venues on a regular basis which are attended not just by tourists, but which attract Barbadians as well. The most important jazz event in Barbados is the Paint It Jazz Festival, a week-long festival held in January. The festival started in 1993 and has firmly established itself on the Barbadian cultural calendar. It has proved to be successful and in 1998 approximately seven hundred visitors went to Barbados specifically for the festival, with a total of BDS $4.4 million of income generated from tourists.[46] It features a selection of international artistes such as Randy Crawford, Roberta Flack and Chaka Khan, as well as local musicians such as Nicholas Brancker and Anthony 'Boo' Rudder.

## Steelband Music

A very popular music in Barbados is steelband. As I have suggested in Chapter 1, p. 83, steelband is a universally recognised 'Caribbean' music, found in many Caribbean territories, and indeed all over the world. Steelbands evolved in Trinidad in the late 1930s and 1940s and rapidly developed and gained

[46] 'Jazz Festival Growing', *Daily Nation* Online, 2 October 1998.

widespread popularity around the Caribbean. 'When Trinidad and Tobago gained its independence from Britain in 1962, pan was already a national symbol.'[47] Early instruments were made from a variety of metal objects, though the use of oil drums (a by-product of Trinidad's oil industry) became the standard.

According to Fraser et al., a soldier who had served in Trinidad during the Second World War introduced steelbands into Barbados in 1945.[48] Steelband gradually developed, aided by competitions which encouraged bands to improve, but never reached the same level of popularity as in Trinidad. Since steelbands have become involved in the Crop Over Festival their popularity has increased and they are to be found in all walks of life from schools to official functions. Indeed it is interesting to note that on arrival at Barbados' Grantley Adams Airport, the first musical sound that meets the ear is that of steel pan music as one or more pan players seem to be permanently resident just outside the arrivals area. School bands are often heard performing at various events, such as *1627 And All That*, a cultural show (staged mainly for tourists) which features African-inspired dance and music whilst portraying Barbados' history, and official functions such as a reception I attended in honour of the country's Independence celebrations, held by the Prime Minister at his residence on 29 November 1997. Steelbands are regularly featured at the various festivals held throughout the year. An annual competition has been included as part of the Crop Over Festival since 1986,[49] and bands also participate in Kadooment Day, playing on the backs of trucks as part of the parade.

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[47] Stephen Stuempfle, *The Steelband Movement: The Forging of a National Art in Trinidad and Tobago* (Kingston: The Press, University of the West Indies, 1995), p. 2.
[48] H. Fraser, S. Carrington, A. Forde and J. Gilmore, *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage* (Kingston: Heinemann Caribbean, 1990), p. 175.
[49] G. Addington (*sic*) Forde, 'Crop Over Events', *Crop Over Festival Magazine 1988* (National Cultural Foundation and Barbados Board of Tourism) 15-33 (p. 20).

The music that is played by steelbands is incredibly diverse. Popular Caribbean tunes such as Arrow's famous *Hot, Hot, Hot!* and Bob Marley's *Three Little Birds* are often played back to back with classical favourites such as Rimsky-Korsakov's *Flight of the Bumblebee*. Steelbands are very much a part of the Barbadian music scene and are enjoyed at all levels of accomplishment from primary school bands to professional ones.[50]

**Caribbeat**

Whilst not a current popular musical genre, Caribbeat requires mentioning because of the pivotal role it played in Barbadian music in the 1960s. As a musical form it is synonymous with The Merrymen, an all-white Barbadian group who were highly popular in the 1960s and still perform together occasionally today.

Caribbeat was their unique style formed with acoustic guitars and rhythm built up around the guitar sound. Each member of the group tunes their guitar differently, which creates a unique sound that makes their music instantly recognisable. The lyrics are often based on Barbadian folklore such as the legend of Sam Lord, or about events or places in Barbadian life, such as Baxters Road. This led to popularity for The Merrymen probably because local people could identify with the topics of the songs, for example *Beautiful Barbados*, and *Steel Donkey* (a Barbadian phenomenon attributed to the African practice of Obeah).[51] The Caribbean rhythms employed in the music also contributed to The Merrymen's success. Their music found popularity overseas and they were signed to the EMI record label where they worked with George Martin, the producer of The Beatles.

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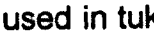
[50] One recorded example of Barbadian steelband music is *The Cockspur Five Star Steel Orchestra Vol. 1* (West Indies Records WIRL W232, 1985).
[51] Fraser et al., *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage*, pp. 123, 175.

They travelled widely at the height of their careers, and today maintain popularity particularly in Canada where many Barbadians go to work or study.

Emile Straker, the leader of the group, told me they used tuk influences in their up tempo music, which also contributed to their unique sound.[52] The influences used are in fact rhythms that are used in tuk, notably the  rhythm, which in tuk is a bass drum rhythm in the fastest tempo, and is used as a bass guitar rhythm in some Merrymen songs such as *Big Bamboo*, *Steel Donkey* and *Too Deep Too Blue*. Another bass rhythm, simply two crotchets, which is found in the fassie tempo of tuk, can be found in the Merrymen's song *Nutseller*.[53]

**Spouge**

Spouge is sometimes claimed as one of the two indigenous musics of Barbados (tuk being the other). However, when talking generally to people in Barbados, spouge is rarely evoked as an example of Barbadian music.

Spouge is synonymous with the singer Jackie Opel (1938-1970) who was the main exponent of this style of music.[54] Spouge drew its influences from ska, the precursor to reggae, and calypso, thus it was a composite of Caribbean musics, and as it developed in the 1960s it conveniently filled the gap in the Barbadian popular music scene for a Barbadian national music created by a Barbadian, especially in the years immediately after Independence. Best says that 'spouge music demonstrated that Barbados and Barbadians were capable of creating and

[52] Interview, 5 August 1998.
[53] These songs can be found on *The Merrymen Greatest Hits Vol. 1* (Rainbow WIRL, MMCD 1047, 1992). Other albums include *Come to my Island*, (Merry Disc, MMS1038, 1980).
[54] Fraser et al., *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage*, p. 169.

sustaining a musical art form. Spouge created a national identity'.[55] Even in 2000 it was claimed as 'the only musical form to which Barbados can claim ownership'.[56] Whilst it may have been indigenous, that does not mean spouge can lay claim to the same sort of status that tuk can because it does not have the same historical sanctity.

Spouge is a fast, lively music with guitar, bass, drums, keyboard and cowbell comprising the basic band. Various additions of brass instruments are made depending on where it is performed and by whom.[57] It became popular across the Caribbean, according to Fraser et al., 'in some territories eclipsing both ska and calypso.' However it had a fairly short lifespan, declining by the mid-1970s. The key reason for this is often thought to be Jackie Opel's untimely death in a car accident in 1970. Best, however, attributes the decline of spouge more directly to 'forces extrinsic to the music (i.e., socio-political, ideological and cultural factors) than to the music itself'.[58] Fraser et al. suggest that the lack of development of the music was itself was partly to blame:

> due to its great popularity, listeners found themselves bombarded from all directions with a beat which eventually became boring because it saw little change or development, due to the fact that the one who had created it was not around to nurture it.[59]

Any music that is to make any impact on the popular music scene has to conform to variations and development. It would certainly be monotonous if a particular genre of music were presented in only one way with no variation. Certainly in

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[55] Curwen Best, *Barbadian Popular Music and the Politics of Caribbean Culture* (Vermont: Schenkman Books, 1999), p. 55.
[56] Adonijah, 'Spouge rebound set for Sunday', *Daily Nation* Online, 13 March 2000.
[57] For examples of spouge listen to: The Draytons Two, *Raw Spouge* (WIRL Music Group, n.d.); Jackie Opel, *The Memorable Jackie Opel* (WIRL W1015, 1984); Various Artistes, *Recollections* (WIRL WK269, 1990).
[58] Best, *Barbadian Popular Music,* p. 51.
[59] Fraser et al., *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage*, p. 170.

popular music it is not at all uncommon for a particular genre of music to fall out of favour after a period of time, in fact it is more the norm. There are some genres of music that are not at the forefront of the popular music industry that do keep going regardless of changes in the mainstream, for example heavy metal. Musics that have widespread, high profile success are more likely to enjoy this for a short intense period before giving way to the next trend. The punk era of the 1970s provides one such example. Punk is a high profile music that provided a vehicle for young people to protest at the establishment in challenging and at times anti-social ways, thus serving a purpose for them to express their dissatisfaction with life and the way they felt they were treated. This era gave way after only a few years to the New Romantic era, a complete contrast to the loud aggressiveness of punk. Both genres have already experienced some degree of comeback in the early twenty-first century. I believe that spouge's demise followed such a pattern and was therefore not that significant, but rather the fact that it had been elevated to the position of the national music meant that those who desired such a music felt its demise more greatly than they might otherwise have done. However, there are moves being made in the twenty-first century to revive spouge and in 2001 an unofficial Jackie Opel Day was planned on the anniversary of his death.[60] Spouge's revival may well prove successful and it might in time become accepted as part of the country's cultural heritage.

## Soca

Soca is the dance version of calypso. It started developing late in the 1970s and grew in popularity gradually until the mid-1980s when it gained widespread acceptance. It is now a highly popular music in Barbados and elsewhere, though

[60] 'In memory of Jackie Opel', *Barbados Advocate*, 16 February 2001, p. 19 and 'Jackie Opel Day March 9', *Weekend Nation*, 23 March 2001, p. 24.

it originated in Trinidad, the result of collaboration between calypsonian Lord Shorty and arranger Ed Watson who created a standardised accompaniment pattern that is widely used.[61]

Today much calypso is called soca, but, as discussed earlier, pp. 261-7, calypso is reliant on its lyrics. Soca lyrics are usually short, of little significance, and generally relate to having a good time. There is a sort of brainwashing effect created by the persistent repetition of lines such as 'put your hands in the air', which provokes the audience to do just that en masse. Indeed it seems whatever the singer says to do is done. Manuel et al. say that 'the usual theme of soca songs is "jam and wine", which denotes not an aperitif but "party and dance"'.[62] The 'wine' refers to 'wining', a style of dancing very similar, or identical, to Barbadian wukkin' up, but perhaps with a more acceptable face to it for the younger generations – soca does not carry any negative connotations of tuk and wukkin' up. (Wukkin' up was discussed in Chapter 2, p. 115).

Soca is undoubtedly a very popular music and it is easy to see the attraction of soca over calypso. Soca is generally a fast and lively music, good for dancing with easy to remember lyrics and short verses. It has the right ingredients to appeal to the younger generations and because it is dance music it does bridge the generation gap to a certain extent. Calypso lyrics whilst being clever in their composition can quickly be forgotten once the subject of the calypso is no longer news or gossip. Also as calypso remains regionalised, what is interesting and amusing to Barbadians about something that has happened in Barbados, is likely to be of little interest to Jamaicans, and so on. Soca gets around these problems

[61] Manuel et al., *Caribbean Currents,* p. 193.
[62] Ibid., p. 194.

by being a generic music that will appeal to all Caribbean people, and also finds a market place in the world's popular music industry.[63]

## Dub and Dancehall

These are two closely related musical styles where the key difference seems to be the variation in the style of 'chanting' the lyrics. Where I refer to one style, it should be read as referring to both.

Dub and dancehall started in Jamaica and quickly spread throughout the Caribbean, to the U.S.A. and to Britain. It swept into Barbados in the 1980s and dominated the musical choice of the youth. The music features lively rhythms and chanting, which soon influenced Barbadian artistes. A key feature, particularly of dub, was the use of lyrics with some sort of message – seemingly another variation on social commentary songs. It is probably the genre's sometimes suggestive and risqué lyrics that have fuelled older generations' disapproval of, and therefore younger generations' demands for, such music, plus the view that the music is perceived to be 'anti-establishment'.[64]

There were moves made in 2000 to ban dub shows at the National Stadium in an effort to rid Barbados of the vulgar side of its music scene.[65] The objections to dub were because the lyrics often condoned disrespect, the use of drugs, crime and indecent behaviour. Whilst there seems to have been a desire to be rid of those types of lyrics, an effort to ban dub totally would probably simply drive the music underground and create even more demand for it, albeit in a black market.

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[63] For examples of Barbadian soca listen to: Square One, *Sweetness Sweet'ness* (Square One, SO(97)001, 1997); Krosfyah, *Fyah Riddums* (Kalinago Recordings, KRCD9703,1997).
[64] Interview with Karl Watson, 3 December 1997.
[65] Ricky Jordan, 'Barrow raps dub show ban', *Daily Nation*, 2 May 2000, p. 18.

Journalist Tyrone Evelyn states there is a 'place for dub with conscious lyrics' and that the problem is more to do with society – 'this society is one with double standards' and that 'once something comes from overseas [...] it is gobbled up with gay abandon'.[66]

In an interview with record producer Eddy Ayoung in 1999, I was told that dub was the most popular music in Barbados, particularly in the 14-25 age range. This was attributed to the fact that DJs on radio stations, at nightclubs and at parties have influenced the youth by playing a lot of dub. Ayoung also suggested that the use of a lot of boom bass and low-key drum was influential because it reflected African culture.[67] Perhaps then this is a significant factor in dub's popularity – the youth searching for an identity rich in the African heritage that many Barbadians are today seeking. Dub and dancehall are popular musics in Barbados today and regardless of what efforts are made to reduce their impact, they are unlikely to go away.

## FESTIVALS

Despite being a small country, Barbados holds many festivals, almost one every month. Even if these are not specifically music festivals where music is the main purpose of the festival, music plays some role in most of them and a wide variety of tastes are catered for. The festivals that are discussed here are those that include, or plan to include tuk. They are discussed in the order in which they occur during the calendar year.

[66] 'Place for dub with conscious lyrics', *Barbados Advocate*, 24 April 2000, p. 10.
[67] Eddy Ayoung, Sales and Marketing Director, CRS Records, Interview 17 February 1999.

## The Holetown Festival

This is a week-long festival held in February to mark the anniversary of the first settlement of Barbados in Holetown. The festival started in 1976 and is an important fixture on the Barbadian cultural calendar. This is not specifically a music festival, but features plenty of musical variety. It is well attended by locals and tourists, particularly because it also coincides with the peak season for North American and Canadian tourists. The opening ceremony includes a selection of school bands, steelbands, vocal and instrumental ensembles, and the beating of the retreat by the Zouave uniformed band of the Barbados Regiment, the volunteer reserve of the Barbados Defence Force.[68] On each evening a concert is staged ranging from gospel to African music, to jazz, and a floodlit musical tattoo provides an evening of entertainment by the Police Band. A parade on the Saturday of the festival features music including bands from school cadet corps. The street fair, which is also held on the Saturday, features a tuk band in a traditional role, wandering amongst the crowds entertaining them.

## Holders Opera Season

Founded in 1993 and taking place in March/April, this has been a highly successful event and attracts opera fans from far and wide. The festival is held in the grounds of Holders Plantation House (owned by the wealthy British businessman John Kidd) and features internationally famous opera stars such as Pavarotti and Lesley Garrett. The average Barbadian is however precluded from attending by the cost although, according to Kidd, he does not make a profit from

[68] The name Zouave refers to the uniforms worn, copied from colonial military uniforms in French Africa. Queen Victoria wished to have some Zouaves and so the uniform was copied for the West India Regiments. It is today worn by the band for ceremonial duties only. Fraser et al., *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage*, p. 200.

the season but holds it because he and his wife enjoy running it.[69] As well as opera, other musics and theatre are included in the season. For example, in 1998 performances such an 'An Evening with Mr Mozart and Dr Haydn' and 'Wit and Willow – A celebration of cricket' were staged.

There have been two attempts at staging opera with a Barbadian flavour as part of the Holders Season. The first was the production of *Inkle and Yarico,* which was performed by local artistes at the 1997 Season. *Inkle and Yarico* was written by the British writer, George Colman the Younger, with music by Samuel Arnold, and was first published and performed in London in 1787. The opera is based on an early eighteenth century story by Richard Steele, which is loosely based on the true-life account of Inkle and Yarico, set in Barbados, and written by Richard Ligon in the mid-seventeenth century.[70] The opera follows traditional operatic style with an orchestral overture followed by solo arias and duets. The inclusion of steelpan in this production adds a Caribbean dimension to the music. The main themes of the opera have also been adapted and re-mixed in various contemporary Caribbean musical genres such as ringbang and dub, featuring Barbadian artistes such as Viking Tundah, Adisa Andwele, Alison Hinds, and Eddy Grant's Ringbang Crew.[71]

The second was *The Caribbean Tempest*, an adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* at the 1999 Season. This featured Shakespeare's words set to Caribbean music, including an arrangement of the Barbadian folk song, 'Hurrah for

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[69] Ricky Jordan, 'No Holders show', *Daily Nation* Online, 9 February 2001.
[70] Richard Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes*, 2nd edn (London: Peter Parker, 1673; repr. London: Frank Cass, 1998), pp. 54-5.
[71] 'Musical showcase', *Sunseeker*, 20 November 1997, p. 28.
The opera is available on CD, which also features the re-mixes – *Inkle & Yarico*, Friends of Holders Season (Holders Season, RDRCD-3175, n.d.).

Jin Jin' with sampled tuk-style accompaniment. There is also a short tuk piece entitled 'Ariel's Tuk' performed by Ruk-a-Tuk International.[72]

## Oistins Fish Festival

This not a music festival, but a festival of Barbadian culture held over the Easter weekend. It started in 1977 as a celebration of Oistins' contribution to Barbadian life, at which local food and drink are in plentiful supply, especially fish, as this is the major fishing port. Events range from fish boning and cooking competitions, to climbing a greased pole to get the prize from the top. There is also a range of local arts and crafts on sale. Staged events include a performance by the Barbados Landship. In this festival tuk bands play a traditional role, wandering between the various drinks stalls, playing for the crowds assembled there and collecting money. When I attended this festival in 2000, I saw that some of the crowd followed the band from one stall to another. This was also the only occasion I have seen anyone wukkin' up to tuk and it was evident that this highly amused the on-lookers, and was encouraged by the band (wukkin' up was discussed in Chapter 2, p. 115).

## Congaline

Congaline has also been marketed as 'The World's Greatest Street Party' and takes place in late April/early May. It started in 1994 and under the control of the National Cultural Foundation has become firmly established on the Barbadian cultural calendar. Local popular musics are featured, predominantly soca. Until 2001, on the final day of the festival, a huge T-shirt band parade took to the streets and hundreds of Barbadians would 'jump up' to the music blasted from extra large

[72] The music is available on CD - *The Caribbean Tempest*, Holders Season Barbados (The Holders Trust, HHTCD001, 1999.

sound systems transported on the back of trucks, whilst the participants consumed seemingly endless amounts of rum and beer. This particular event was entirely reminiscent of Kadooment Day at the end of the Crop Over Festival. 'De Congaline Village' where the festival is based also echoes the set-up for Crop Over events with arts and crafts, food and drink stalls, and a venue for live performances.

The National Cultural Foundation are now however promoting Congaline as a 'music festival', apparently downplaying the street party aspect. Al Gilkes, the Foundation's Chairman, suggested that in 2003 there might be a nightly congaline during the festival featuring 'people dancing to indigenous music forms like tuk and steelband music'.[73]

**Celtic Festival**

This festival is held to celebrate Celtic culture. It started in 1996 with a Celtic Night, and has developed into a longer festival that takes place during the last two weeks in May. It features artistes from various countries that have Celtic connections and performances have included Welsh male voice choirs, a tattoo featuring the Zouave Band of the Barbados Defence Force performing with a Highland pipe band, and a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta performed by a Welsh opera group. At the first festival in 1996, Ruk-a-Tuk International, Barbados' foremost tuk band was featured.[74] In 1997 Celtuk, a mixture of Celtic singing and tuk band music was included on the programme.[75]

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[73] Ricky Jordan, 'Conga-Line Here Again', *Daily Nation* Online, 23 April 2002.
[74] 'Trust to Present Celtic Night', *Barbados Advocate*, 19 February 1996, p. 3.
[75] 'Festival Fever', *Just Beyond Your Imagination* (Barbados Tourism Authority, Winter 1996/7).

## Crop Over

This is the most important festival on the Barbadian cultural calendar and takes place in July/August. Although Crop Over as it exists now is a fairly recent invention, the roots of a Crop Over festival date back to the days of slavery. It was common to hold some form of celebration on the sugar plantations at the end of the sugar crop, modelled on the English Harvest Home celebrations. Harvest Home in Britain had, according to Gilmore, practically disappeared by the turn of the twentieth century, 'having been to some extent replaced by the Harvest Festival introduced by the Anglican Church in the middle of the nineteenth century'.[76]

The festival continued throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, but appears to have died out during the early 1940s, undoubtedly affected by the Second World War and the outside influences that were starting to infiltrate Barbadian life. By this time the sugar industry was changing with corporately owned plantations swallowing up old family held estates and large-scale sugar factories replacing many of the small windmills. Thus the move away from traditional plantation life played some role in the decline of the traditional festival. It may have been this demise that was partially responsible for the decline in tuk – after all some sort of reason is needed to play and if the traditional venues such as the plantation yard and the rum shop no longer existed, or were no longer welcoming, then tuk bands may well have simply given up playing.

The Crop Over festival was revived in 1974 by the Barbados Board of Tourism in an effort to attract more visitors in what were the quiet months of July and August.

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[76] John Gilmore 'Crop Over: A Historical Perspective' *Crop Over Festival Magazine 1988* (Barbados: National Cultural Foundation and Barbados Board of Tourism), 6-8.

From that time it started taking on a different format and became a peoples' festival rather than a plantation festival. It has retained some links with its traditional raison d'être such as the ceremonial bringing in of the last canes of the harvest, but otherwise it bears little resemblance to the old plantation festival.

Today's Crop Over consists of weeks of events held at a variety of locations. There is a gala opening at which the last canes are brought in. After that a vast array of events including craft exhibitions and parades ensue. In the weeks immediately running up to the festival there are numerous calypso tents where calypsonians compete for places in the annual calypso monarch competition 'Pic-o-de-Crop'. There are a mixture of amateur and professional calypsonians who take part in the tents, but those likely to make it as far as the semi-finals tend to be the professionals, most of whom sing part-time. There are also other music events such as a Junior Calypso Monarch competition, folk concerts and Party Monarch Competition.

The last weekend of the festival coincides with the bank holiday Monday given to commemorate Emancipation Day on 1 August. This weekend is practically a non-stop event. It starts with a Jump Up commencing at 2 a.m. on the Saturday, then a two-day 'Bridgetown Market' (held just outside Bridgetown on the Spring Garden Highway) at which local arts and crafts people sell their goods, numerous food and drink stalls do non-stop business, steelbands perform and loud music is blasted from giant-sized speakers at some of the food stalls.

Although this is the most important festival, tuk does not play a major role compared to other musical forms. Its main involvement is at the tuk band

competition, which takes place on the final weekend, a sideshow at the Bridgetown Market, and this was discussed in detail in Chapter 2, pp. 205-9. There is also a traditional role for tuk bands to play at this event. In 1998 when I attended, I saw a band wandering around the Market entertaining the crowds. In 1999, a preliminary round of the Junior Tuk Competition was staged as part of the Crop Over Bajan Do-Flicky event. This was an evening of entertainment that also included semi-finals of the Junior Calypso Monarch competition, displays of Barbadian culture and guest appearances by calypsonians.[77] Tuk bands do play at other Crop Over events such as the opening ceremony and in 2000 were featured in street parades through Bridgetown every Saturday during the festival.[78]

On the Sunday evening *Cohobblopot* takes places at the National Stadium. This is a variety show, featuring a mixture of dance, calypso, folk music and comedy, all performed by local artistes.

Photograph 30: The stage at the National Stadium, Cohobblopot, 1998[79]

[77] René Fields, 'Our Heritage and all that Do-flicky', *Daily Nation* Online, 18 July 1999.
[78] 'Crop-Over Comes To Town', *Daily Nation* Online, 1 July 2000.
[79] Photograph taken by John Meredith, 2 August 1998.

On the bank holiday, or Kadooment Day as it is generally known, Grand Kadooment takes place. This is a massive parade of themed costume bands numbering thousands of people, similar in style to carnival in Trinidad. Indeed Drayton says that 'the influence of Trinidad carnival on this festival is obvious although participation in bands is smaller and the social class mixing, a hallmark of Trinidad carnival, is not so evident'.[80] It starts at the National Stadium where the bands are judged for their costumes. The leaders of the bands are known as Kings and Queens and they are judged separately on their extremely elaborate and very large costumes, which have often taken many months to complete. One band may consist of tens of people, another may consist of hundreds. Once they leave the Stadium, the bands make their way along a winding route the few miles to Spring Garden Highway, but it is a slow process and it is often several hours after the event starts at the Stadium that the first band reaches its destination. Each band follows a truck, as shown in Photograph 31, that carries a large sound system that blasts out whatever their chosen music is, and keeps them constantly supplied with drink. It can be early evening by the time the last bands arrive at the Highway making this a long, but action-packed event.

Photograph 31: A Band Truck on Spring Garden Highway on Kadooment Day

[80] Drayton, 'Art, Culture and National Heritage', p. 214.

Photograph 32: Some costumed band members on Kadooment Day[81]

From 2000 the festival was shortened in length from over a month to three weeks, and efforts are being made by the National Cultural Foundation 'to rekindle the traditional community spirit of the festival'.[82] Events were planned for the towns of Oistins and Speightstown, well away from the usual venues, and for the centre of Bridgetown. Whether this style of festival proves to be as successful as the previous format remains to be seen, but overall Crop Over is a highly successful event, which, now recontextualised from the traditional plantation festival to the national form of carnival, is firmly established on the Barbadian, and indeed the Caribbean calendar of annual festivals.

## The National Independence Festival of Creative Arts (NIFCA)

This festival started in 1972 and is held throughout November, finishing at the end of the month to coincide with the celebration of Independence Day (30 November). There are many events that take place in local communities as well as in formal venues in and around Bridgetown. NIFCA is an opportunity for Barbadians of any age to take part in competitions in the performing, visual and creative arts that

[81] Photographs 31 and 32 taken by John Meredith, 3 August 1998.
[82] 'Crop-Over Comes to Town', *Daily Nation* Online, 1 July 2000.

culminate in a gala presentation for the finalists. The emphasis is on providing fora for anyone to showcase their talents, thus professionals and amateurs take part in all categories. The musical component of NIFCA is wide-ranging and includes calypso, folk song, school recorder groups and gospel. I was in Barbados during two weeks of NIFCA in 1997. I only came across tuk as part of the festival once - this was when Ruk-a-Tuk International played at the official opening of The National Heritage Fair at the Heritage Park.

## SUMMARY

The music scene in Barbados is today very active and enjoys a variety of musical genres produced by local artistes. It is only probably in the last twenty years that many of these artistes have enjoyed success in their home country. This is, I believe, largely due to the long-held belief that for something to be good it has to come from overseas, and that the culture of Barbadians was inferior, if indeed people acknowledged that Barbados had any culture of its own.

Festivals play an important part in the cultural, social and economic life of the country. However, from this overview of festivals, I would suggest that tuk does not have a major role to play in them. It does seem to have an established role however, particularly at Crop Over, and this is important for the future of tuk.

# CONCLUSION

Compared to other Caribbean countries early writings on musical activity in Barbados are relatively few. This may partly be because of its small size when compared to, say, Jamaica. Larger countries were visited by more people, thus more records and accounts are likely to be available. It is not surprising that European visitors to the region generally found the music of the slaves strange to their ears as it was undoubtedly very different to the music they were accustomed to in terms of instrumentation, rhythm and harmony. Even today people visiting different countries with culture dissimilar to their own can find the music strange to listen to and might therefore dismiss it as something they don't like (as indeed they do with other things they encounter, such as food).

The lack of documentary evidence for tuk is problematic. Whilst many people in Barbados feel they know all about tuk, in reality what they actually know is the standard generalised account that has evolved of tuk's history, which is in reality fairly superficial, and not based on ethnomusicological research. Lack of evidence does of course mean that it is not possible to be absolutely certain about tuk's development. It does however provide an opportunity to suggest various scenarios for its development and existence.

In some ways slaves were not considered human and so were considered to be uncultured. Certainly some believed that the slaves arrived from Africa with nothing – which was probably true in a material sense, but what they took with them in terms of culture, folklore, skills and knowledge was scarcely considered, and when it was, it was generally because the slave owners wished to prevent their slaves continuing any African practices. Whilst we have some contemporary accounts of slave musical practices, these are often Euro-centrically biased and

are not written in sufficient detail to be able to establish a comprehensive picture of what actually happened.

Exposure to European music started on slave ships for some Africans, but this would have been limited and of short duration, and on the plantations they would not have encountered significant amounts of any European music. The slaves made instruments they were familiar with, i.e., African ones, from what materials they could. The fact that drumming was at one time banned would have strengthened their desire to play African music as they realised it had some power over the colonisers. Music was one of the few links they had with Africa and was therefore of great significance and it seems unlikely that they would have easily given up their music for that of the colonisers. What they did adopt was, I believe, to mimic their masters, imitating their social customs.

The lack of documented evidence for the musical history of Barbados, and specifically for tuk, is not surprising as the activities of the black population were not generally considered worthy of note by the white population. It was the few visitors to Barbados that wrote accounts of life that document any sort of slave activity, though often in a derisory manner. Oral tradition of African peoples (and for the lower classes of whites) meant that what was passed on was what was chosen by a particular generation. This also accounts for the lack of specific tuk repertoire to a certain extent. The demise of sung tuk indicates that the role this performed has been taken over by another musical format – calypso. The lack of repertoire also points to the fact that these were very much improvised songs, and of their time, thus not always relevant for passing on, and often forgotten when another was made up.

Early establishment of militia and military presence in Barbados provided opportunities for military style music. The employment of slaves in the militia is certainly significant, especially those used as drummers – seemingly the earliest likelihood of African slaves playing military style drums and music. Handler suggests that slave participation in the militia 'was probably one of the many forces that contributed to the creolization process'.[1] The militia/military bands may well have provided a continuous source of European music and perhaps it was because of the authoritarian mission of these forces that tuk music developed as an imitation, poking fun at this authority.

The use of European instruments such as the fiddle and military style drums may have been one of convenience or one of choice. Whichever, all the instruments have parallels with African instruments and playing them was therefore an easy transition. The fact that tuk exhibits characteristics of European military music must mean it is in some way linked to the militia or the military in Barbados.

The fact that tuk's prime venue of the rum shop is no longer as significant in the lives of the working classes as it once was (though it will undoubtedly remain a place for meeting and drinking) is key to tuk's demise and recontextualisation. I attribute this to social changes and peoples' perceptions and aspirations evolving as they became exposed to a wider variety of cultural input during the twentieth century. Coincidental with this was the demise of the traditional activities such as picnics, at which tuk bands had provided the musical entertainment. It is the older players today who play events in a more casual manner perhaps evocative of the old time bands. The younger players tend to perform regularly at cultural shows

[1] Jerome S. Handler, 'Freedmen and Slaves in the Barbados Militia', *Journal of Caribbean History*, 19 (1984), 1-25 (p. 20).

staged for visitors. I believe the older players are those who grew up when the traditional bands were still in existence, and have maintained the same approach to tuk, keeping it spontaneous, maybe a little rough at times, improvised and adapted to suit the venue and the audience. The younger players who have grown up in an era when tuk had, to a large extent, died out, have taken tuk and polished it. There is undoubtedly spontaneity and improvisation in their performances, but they have to maintain standards. They are after all acting as ambassadors for the venue they are performing in, as well as their country. It is essential therefore that their performance is polished and of a high standard. For an audience who have never heard tuk before it is important that the band sounds good and has some wide-ranging appeal, such as familiar tunes to which the often diversely international audience can relate.

The place of the Landship in Barbadian society is very much on a par with that of the tuk band. They share a similar story in that the exact origins have not been documented (or if they were, these have disappeared), and it is not possible to accurately date the origins of either.

The incidence of musics similar to tuk in and around the Caribbean is attributable to the effects of European colonisation, the slave trade and migration. The fact that different combinations of instruments are used in different places can be attributed to varying influences of colonisers and availability of different instruments. What does seem to bind these musics together most importantly is their purpose and role as the music of the black working class population, seemingly predominantly during the nineteenth century and roughly the first half of the twentieth. The fact that they are little practised today merely reflects the

changes that society in general has undergone as the twentieth century progressed. As has already been discussed, modern technology, increased mobility, changes in employment trends, and in many of the Caribbean territories, freedom from colonialism, have all changed people's ways of life and aspirations. The average working class family will own a radio and/or a television thus the need for community music making on a regular basis has pretty much disappeared. The fact that these musics reappear on holidays and other special occasions is significant – this is obviously recreating the ritual or ceremony of the past, a reflection of what life used to be like, and also an opportunity for the few remaining practitioners to display their art form in a reinvention of tradition.

One of the aims of my research was, if possible, to ascertain the origins of tuk. For the various reasons discussed, this has not been possible. However, I have identified four scenarios which may have led to tuk's development.

Firstly, the evolution of the tuk band concurrent with the Landship. The founder of the Landship started it as a serious activity and, considering his desire to recreate naval life on land, I believe he would have made sure as much naval tradition as possible was observed. This would have included a musical ensemble such as those found on board naval ships. It is commonly accepted that the Landship was founded in the 1860s and there is no firm evidence of the tuk band as a separate entity until after that time. There is nothing unusual or remarkable about the relationship between the two – they are imitations of facets of naval life and the association of both activities with the black working class population reinforced the consequent social stigmas attached to them and their shared heritage. The

popularity of both seem to be parallel during the early twentieth century, a time of great change in Barbados.

Secondly, tuk may have evolved as an imitation of the military or militia bands. Considering the intensity of the cultural imposition on the African descended population it is conceivable that after a certain amount of time, it was accepted that this was their music as much as the white population's. The employment of slaves in the militia may well have laid the foundation for tuk music, teaching them military style drumming as well as giving them an acceptable face to their musical practices. The fact that they could disguise some African practices in the military style drumming may well have encouraged the spreading of what they learned in the militia, which in time developed into the tuk band. As there is no documented evidence prior to approximately the end of the nineteenth/start of the twentieth century, it can be assumed that whilst this activity may have been on-going for some time, it was not reported because it was a black working class activity. It may be expected that British visitors to the island would have written something of tuk. Surely something that resembled a military band in sound or appearance was worthy of comment, if only for its novelty factor. However I believe this did not happen because outsiders never observed tuk. It was played at social gatherings, at the rum shop and in the plantation yard, none of which would normally have been frequented by visitors, thus no parallels were drawn. The white population who might have witnessed tuk, notably the management of the plantations, would probably not have considered it to be anything out of the ordinary, rather an accepted way of the workers entertaining themselves in the style of a military band. Indeed they may have considered the workers to be 'cultured' by this and were in some way flattered by such imitation. After Emancipation imitation of

military style bands might have taken place on the plantations as a form of retaliation against the colonial masters. The reference provided by Cruickshank in 1911 to 'touk dances' being held during slavery, which was discussed in Chapter 2, p. 89, may point to the existence of an early form of tuk band on the plantations prior to Emancipation, but it is not possible to be certain as the evidence cannot be substantiated.[2]

If the tuk band and the Landship developed separately, what may have happened is that the band that evolved as a result of militia influence was adopted as the band of the Landship. As there are similarities between army and navy music, this would not be surprising. Indeed bearing in mind that the Landship was set up for black working class men, many of whom would have worked on the plantations, it is highly likely they were the first Landship members, and those that were musicians were able to transfer their skills.

Thirdly, another possible imitative reason for tuk is that of copying British soldiers visiting rum shops. They may have played in return for rum or simply to entertain themselves. This could have been where soldiers taught locals to play in a military style, maybe giving them old fifes or penny whistles. This is however purely speculative and does seem less likely than other scenarios, and would require substantial evidence to support it. It may have been a minor contributing or even reinforcing factor, but I suspect little more.

The final possible scenario is that the tuk band became more widespread and visible after the British garrison was withdrawn in 1905. The band could then get

[2] J. Graham Cruickshank, 'Negro English, With Reference Particularly to Barbados', *Timehri*, 3rd series, 1 (1911), 102-6 (p. 106).

away with playing military style music in the streets and thus became associated with travelling around from village to village. This would tie in with the earliest evidence of the tuk band as it is known today that I have discovered, the photograph of the old tuk band shown in Chapter 2, p. 147. That is not to say there was no music of this type before then, but seems to offer a plausible explanation as to why there is no earlier evidence – what there was before may have been restricted to the plantation and the rum shop. It was perhaps not acceptable to parade on the streets playing tuk, similar to the opposition to the Landship being seen wearing naval style uniforms, as if imitating the Navy.

It cannot be stated with certainty that one of these scenarios is the true origin of the tuk band. However, I believe the most plausible of these, considering what evidence there is, are (a) that either tuk developed as a result of slaves being taught to play military drums in the militia and them then adapting this to suit their own purpose on the plantations, or, (b) the tuk band is an integral part of the Landship organisation and only came about as a separate entity after the Landship was established, some time late in the nineteenth century. What I would suggest happened is that the militia connection was the first part of the process, and that when the Landship developed with its own similar musical formation, there was a crossing over of musical elements, and a natural progression ensued where the musicians of the established bands were in demand to play for the Landship as well as independently.

What happened to tuk through the twentieth century was a progression in response to the changes in society. The 1920s saw considerable changes for the black population with the shift in employment domination away from the sugar

plantations, the arrival of revivalist churches, a revival of friendly societies and the development of a political movement campaigning for black rights. Modern technology started its impact on Barbadian society in the 1930s with the arrival of the radio, which opened up Barbadian ears and minds to a range of musics few had encountered before. The arrival of television in the 1960s similarly introduced a new form of entertainment drawing more and more people away from traditional forms of entertainment such as the Landship and the tuk band. This was intensified by people wishing to climb the social ladder and cast off the label of being working class.[3] As I have discussed, there were (and still are to some extent), social stigmas attached to activities such as tuk, and for those keen to better themselves either in their career or in the eyes of their peers, to be linked with such activities was not desirable. I know from my fieldwork that an attitude prevails in some people's minds that tuk is nothing more than an outdated form of working class activity and whilst this continues it will never totally be accepted by all Barbadians as their indigenous music or as an important part of their cultural heritage.

Despite the uncertainty surrounding the origins of tuk, it is undoubtedly influenced by both the British population of Barbados (military and civilians), and the African slaves and their descendants. Tuk is however, like Bilby says of fife and drum ensembles in the Dominican Republic, 'an example of a form of music that is clearly of both worlds, and yet belongs to neither'.[4] Tuk can then certainly be held up as an indigenous music of Barbados. There are musics similar to tuk elsewhere, some of which sound remarkably similar, but nowhere else is it called

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[3] Other classes would have experienced similar changes, but I am focussing here on the working classes as it was to them that tuk really belonged.
[4] Kenneth Bilby, 'Caribbean Crucible' in *Repercussions*, ed. by Geoffrey Haydon and Dennis Marks (London: Century Publishing, 1985), pp. 128-51 (p. 138).

tuk, and nowhere else has it evolved through precisely the same process because no two colonised territories are identical.

In the newly independent Barbados with a majority black government it was important to choose carefully what aspects of Barbadian culture were going to epitomise the country's culture. Thus the selection of activities and traditions associated with the working classes, a predominantly black sector of society, gave out more than one message. That these activities and traditions were the truly Barbadian ones, i.e., those nurtured from the days of slavery, genuinely creole aspects of culture that stood up as being Barbadian as opposed to British or American. Ashie-Nikoi says that 'Afro-Barbadians are simply ignorant of their African heritage and the prevailing opinion is that there really is little worth knowing in the first place'.[5] Many Barbadians are unsure of what really is their culture. Some don't even realise Barbados has its own culture. This may be because the Barbadian culture that is promulgated today has only evolved since Independence was gained. Therefore anyone born before Independence has not grown up with this culture and may not embrace it simply because it is not what they are familiar with.

The question must be asked then why choose tuk to be part of the national identity rather than calypso, a music that enjoys widespread popularity? Just after Independence was gained there was a perceived need to establish a national identity free of colonial connections. The search for this national identity revealed that much of what epitomised Barbadian society was a culture predominated by European influences which had been imposed by the colonisers and widely held to

[5] Edwina Ashie-Nikoi, 'Cohobblopot: Africanisms in Barbadian Culture through the Lens of Crop-Over', *Journal of Caribbean History*, 32 (1998), 82-120 (p. 113).

be superior to any other. To establish a culture that reflected the heritage of the majority of the population, aspects of black working class culture needed to be drawn on. There were no indigenous Barbadians when the English first colonised, therefore the indigenous culture of the country had to be that which developed as it was populated by the English colonisers, the Irish and Scottish indentured servants, and predominantly the African slaves. Thus it was inevitably going to be a syncretic culture. The slave owners did what they could to impose an alien way of life on their slaves and were, to a degree, successful. The slaves did what they could to perpetuate their African customs and traditions in difficult circumstances but as time went on, more slaves were creole rather than brought in from Africa, and these ways must have become diluted, increasingly so with each successive generation. Thus, certainly by the time of Emancipation, the culture prevalent was a creole one, from which the newly free black population did not have the means to get away. Social structure at that time remained the same as during slavery with the white population firmly in charge. As I have already noted from newspaper searches, what was considered worthy of reporting revolved around the white population and what was important to them. This continued well into the twentieth century and reflects the general attitude to the black population, not just what was perceived to be of interest and importance.

The selection of tuk as the indigenous music of Barbados chosen to be part of the country's national identity is an interesting choice. Musics that contribute to other countries' national identities are usually either in a song format and or have a dance associated with the music, for example Jamaican reggae and merengue from the Dominican Republic. It is probably these factors that make these musics internationally viable – a song can bridge many borders if it is sung in a widely

understood language and has a relevant message or theme in the lyrics. Dance musics, particularly Latin dances, such as the hugely popular merengue have been widely spread by diasporic communities and the universal appeal of dance, especially when accompanied by lively music. What tuk lacks in comparison are both lyrics and a dance form. As discussed in Chapter 2, pp. 160-1, the sung format of tuk has died out and, I believe, been superseded by calypso. There are of course the Landship dances associated with tuk, but as the majority of Barbadian people would probably not wish to be seen performing such dances, there is little likelihood of these being attractive to outsiders. Neither are they really suitable for dancing outside the Landship context as they are not social dances.

What has happened to tuk since Independence is that its role has changed so it is now very much a staged performance rather than an impromptu one. There is still improvisation in the performance, but the venues and purpose for performance have changed. The fact that those in authority claim tuk to be the indigenous music in Barbados is important as this prevents any other music, especially a foreign one, creeping in and taking on that role. This high-ranking approval of tuk has not however caused the entire population of Barbados to claim tuk as its own. There is still very much a negative attitude towards tuk, seemingly stemming from its association with the working classes and the rum shop. Those that were brought up to dismiss tuk have often continued to do so, particularly elderly people who cling on to their values and still believe that they will be looked down on if they associate themselves with tuk. The association of tuk with tourism may create a negative connotation for some Barbadians wishing to dissociate themselves from things connected with colonialism and get away from the label of being 'Little

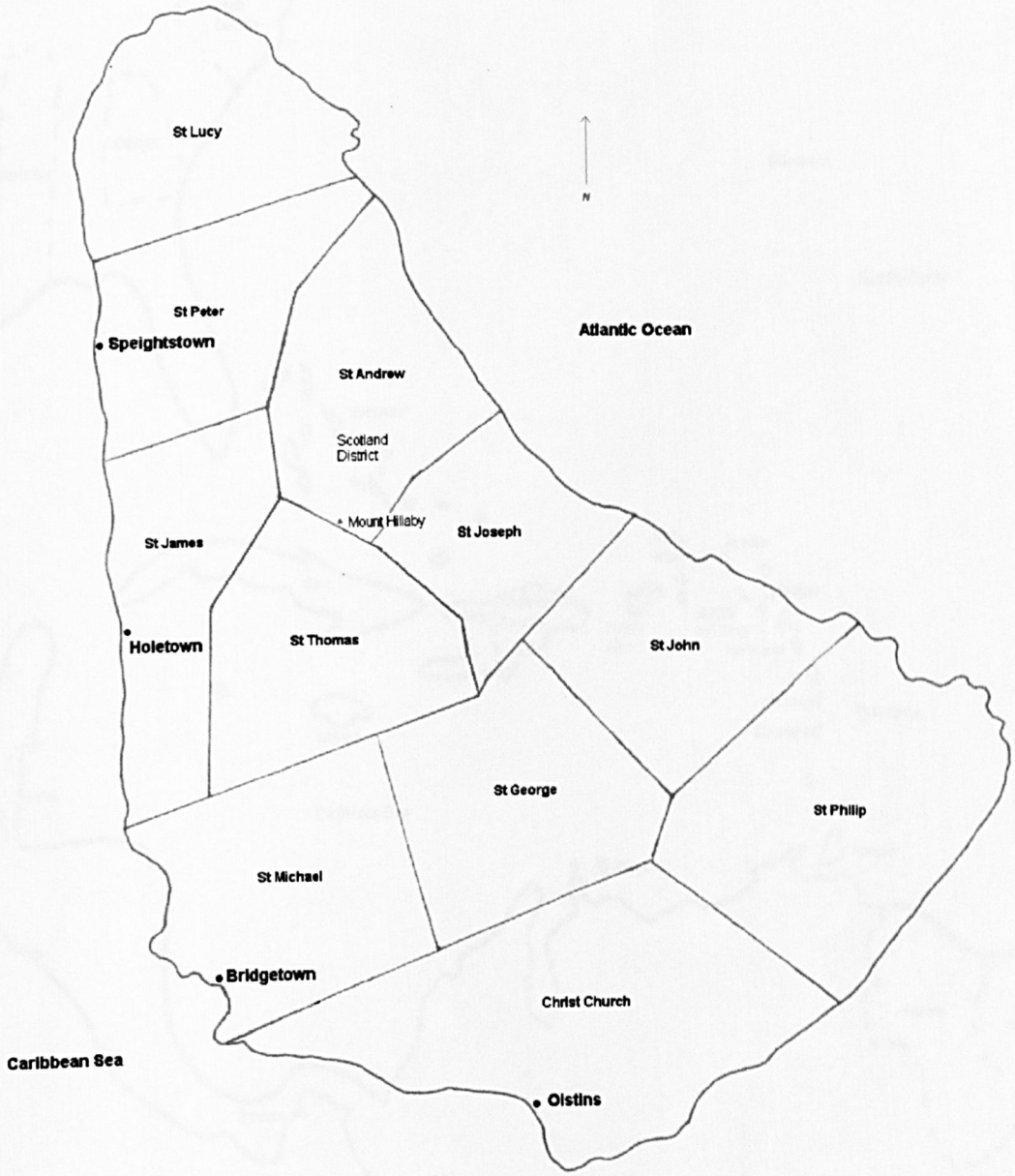
England', thus the idea of sharing in something that is put on show for tourists may be unwelcome.

Tuk's role today is in its recontextualised format and it is unlikely it will revert to its former role as the music of the rum shop and of the working classes, played as entertainment for holidays and celebrations. This is because not just tuk has changed, but because the rum shop has as well, in response to greater changes in society. Tuk will however retain its role as the band of the Landship.

The conscious search for a Barbadian cultural heritage and national identity has undoubtedly been significant in the revival of tuk and other aspects of culture such as the Landship. Without the efforts that were made in the 1970s to ensure such things continued it is likely there would be very little remaining today of working class culture – the creole Barbadian culture developed by the ordinary people. But times have moved on, peoples' ideals have changed and the need for such activities has diminished, thus recontextualising them in some way that will perpetuate them is an alternative to allowing them to die out completely.

The realisation that grew in the second half of the twentieth century that if Barbadian culture was not preserved and promulgated it would effectively disappear and be replaced by outside culture came about for two reasons. One was the increasing influx and seemingly easy adoption of North American culture. The other was gaining Independence from Britain. After three hundred years of colonialism there was a desire to shed the label of 'Little England' and become established as a nation in its own right. This led to the search for things Barbadian and the establishment of a Barbadian national identity.

Tuk is unique to Barbados, it is indigenous and is a syncretic, creole music drawing on the influences and musical traditions of the European and African cultures that laid the foundations of Barbadian life today. This is why it has been selected to be the musical aspect of Barbados' cultural heritage and national identity.




Appendix A: Map of Barbados showing major towns and parish boundaries

Not to scale
Parish boundaries are approximate


Appendix B: Sketch Map of the Caribbean Region

Not to scale
All boundaries are approximate

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# DISCOGRAPHY

The discography is arranged as follows:

Select Discography of Barbadian Music
Field Recordings
Other Recordings
Field Video Recordings
Other Video Recordings

## Select Discography of Barbadian Music

| | |
|---|---|
| The Barbados Folk Singers | *Folk Songs of Barbados* (WIRL, W1006, 1964) |
| The Cockspur Five Star Steel Orchestra | *Cockspur Five Star Steel Orchestra Volume 1* (WIRL, W232, 1985) |
| The Draytons Two | *Raw Spouge* (WIRL, WCD 502, n.d.) |
| Friends of Holders Season | *Inkle & Yarico: an 18th Century Barbadian Legend* (Holders Season, RDRCD-3175, n.d.) |
| Gabby | *Well Done* (Ice Records, 690202, 1999) |
| | *'til now* (Ice Records, 961702, 1996) |
| Gillo | *Ban Fai* (Ice Music, 2000) |
| Holders Season Barbados | *The Caribbean Tempest* (The Holders Trust, HHTCD001, 1999) |
| John King | *Message from Beyond* (CRS Music and Steel Donkey Records, C-0053-CD, 1998) |
| Krosfyah | *Fyah Riddums* (Kalinago Recordings, KRCD9703, 1997) |
| The Merrymen | *Greatest Hits Volume 1* (Rainbow WIRL, MMCD 1047, 1992) |
| | *Come to my Island* (Merry Disc, MMS1038, 1990) |
| Joseph Niles | *Go on to Glory*, Vol. 1 (RED, 0026, 1992) |
| Joseph Niles and The Consolers | *This Train* (WIRL, WK018, 1990) |
| Jackie Opel | *The Memorable Jackie Opel* (WIRL, W1015, 1984) |
| Poonka | *Best of Poonka – King of Tuk* (1996) |
| Red Plastic Bag | *Unlimited* (Bayfield Records, BF-CD-049, 1998) |
| | *plastic@calypso.com* (Bayfield Records, BF-CD-047, 1997) |
| Ruk-a-Tuk International | *Christmas – Indigenous Tuk Band of Barbados* (1996) |
| | *Indigenous Tuk Band Music of Barbados* (WIRL, WK335, 1991) |

| | |
|---|---|
| Sister Marshall | *Walk Holy* (Quality Sound Ins, QS1005 CD, 2001) |
| Square One | *Four Sides* (AmericDisc, 1996) |
| | *Sweetness, sweet'ness* (SO97 001, 1997) |
| Various Artistes | *Dance My Friend: Barbados Island Rhythms* (CRS Music, CRS C-0062CD, 1999) |
| Various Artistes | *Fire in de Wave* (Ice Records, 941502, 1994) |
| Various Artistes | *Full Blast – Classic* (WIRL JT-009, 1988) |
| Various Artistes | *Recollections* (WIRL, WK269, 1990) |
| Various Artistes | *Ringbang Carnival Special 96* (Ice Records, RDRC-2379, 1996) |
| Various Artistes | *Ringbang Rebel Dance* (Ice Records, 951902, 1995) |
| Various Artistes | *Songs of Redemption* (RED, 003, 1987) |

**Field Recordings**

Black Pudding at Hilton Hotel Floor Show, 4 August 1998

Cohobblopot, National Stadium, 2 August 1998

Independence Day Parade, 1 December 1997

Landship Drummers at Heritage Fair, 1 December 1997; Summer School 6 August 1998

Pic o' de Crop Finals, National Stadium, 31 July 1998

Rosehill Tuk Band at Folk Concert, Sherbourne Centre, 29 July 1998

Ruk-a-Tuk International at Rockley Resort Bajan Floor Show, 1 December 1997 and 1 May 2000; Heritage Fair, 1 December 1997; Harbour Master, 27 April 2000 and 22 February 2001

Tuk Band Competition at Crop Over Festival, 1 August 1998

**Other Recordings**

Abadia de al Morisca Institut d'Etudes Niçoises, *En Barouna Collection Patrimoine, Fifres et Tambours*, (Institut d'Etudes Niçoises, n.d.)

Band of the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall, *Nullis Secundus*, (HMV, 1964)

*Big Drum and Other Ritual and Social Music of Carriacou* (Folkways, 34002, 1980)
Blinky and the Roadmasters, *Crucian scratch band music* (Rounder CD 5047)
*Caribbean Dances* (Folkways FS 6840)

The Combined Corps of the 1st and 2nd Battalion of the Grenadier Guards, *Drums and Fifes* (Bandleader, BND1012, 1983)

*Drums of Defiance – Maroon Music from the Earliest Free Black Communities of Jamaica*, (Smithsonian/Folkways 40412)

*Folk Music of Carriacou* (Areito C-001)

*History of Carnival – Christmas, Carnival, Calenda and Calypso from Trinidad 1929-1939* (Matchbox MBCD 301-2)

Geoffrey Holder, *Shango Hymn* (Washington WLP 708)

Mount Royal Big Drum Band (BBC World Service, 29 May 1994)

*Musical traditions of St Lucia, West Indies* (Smithsonian Folkways CDSF 40416)

Old Landship Tuk Band recording (approximately 1960s) courtesy of Alfred Pragnell

Pickles Spence and his Carnival Gombey Troupe - Bermudan Gombey Music, courtesy of Jolene Bean

Sheller and Hawk, *St Vincent Calypsonians* (Soufriere SUS009)

Sparrow's Calypso Troubadours, *Peace Pipe* (Recording Artists, RA4301, 1974)

The Fifes and Drums of Colonial Williamsburg, *Marching Out of Time*, (Colonial Williamsburg: WSC-118, 1989)

Took Band Music (National Sound Archive, Master Tape C881/115; 1CDR0001866 S1 BD5)

*Traveling through the Jungle – Fife and Drum Band Music from The Deep South*, (Testament Records, TCD 5017)

Kingstown Chorale, *We kinda music* (W.I. Records (Barbados) Ltd, 1977)

Various artistes, *Dr Kitch* (Island Records, 1LP954)

*Zoop zoop zoop: traditional music and folklore of St Croix, St Thomas and St John* (New World DIDX 17718)

## Field Video Recordings

Kadooment Day Parade, 3 August 1998

Troubadours International at Oistins Fish Festival, 24 April 2000

The Barbados Landship at the Oistins Fish Festival, 24 April 2000

Tuk Band Competition at Crop Over Festival, 1 August 1998

## Other Video Recordings

*Bridgetown Market comes to Charleston,* Parts 1 and 2 (Barbados Government Information Service)

*Cultural Exposure* (Barbados Government Information Service)

*Deep Blues*, narrated by Robert Palmer (Channel 4/Sound Stuff Production Programme by Radio Active Films

*Texaco Ife's Mokojumbies* (Barbados Government Information Service)